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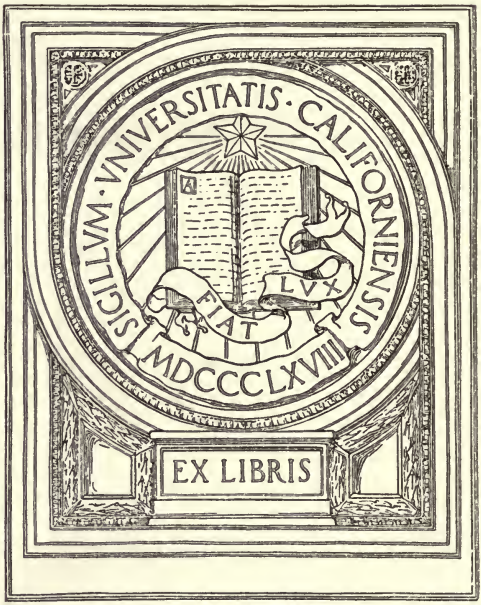

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WESTWARD HO!

A TALE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE DUTCHMAN'S FIRESIDE,"

&c. &c. &c.

"Come all you likely lads that has a mind for to range,
Into some foreign country, your situation for to change;
In seeking some new pleasures we will altogether go,
And we'll settle on the banks of the pleasant Ohio.

Come all you girls from New England that are unmarried yet,
O come along with us, and young husbands you shall get;
For there's all kinds of game besides the buck and doe,
To hunt with dog and rifle all on the Ohio."

Ballad.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

NEW-YORK:

PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY J. & J. HARPER,

NO. 82 CLIFF-STREET.

AND SOLD BY THE PRINCIPAL BOOKSELLERS THROUGHOUT THE UNITED STATES.

1832.

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WESTWARD HO!

A TALE.

CHAPTER I.

"We'll lose ourselves in Venus' grove of myrtle,
Where every little bird shall be a Cupid,
And sing of love and youth; each wind that blows
And curls the velvet leaves shall breathe delights;
The wanton springs shall call us to their banks,
And on the perfum'd flowers woo us to tumble.
But we'll pass on untainted by gross thoughts,
And walk as we were in the eye of Heaven."

"O RARE Ben Jonson!" said some one, and O rare Beaumont and Fletcher say we; for in honest sincerity we prefer this gentle pair to all the old English dramatic writers except Shakspeare. For playful wit, richness of fancy, exuberance of invention, and, above all, for the sweet magic of their language, where shall we find their superiors among the British bards? It is not for us obscure wights to put on the critical nightcap, and, being notorious criminals ourselves, set up as judges of others; but we should hold ourselves base and ungrateful if we did not seize this chance opportunity to raise our voices in these remote regions of the West, where, peradventure, they never dreamed of one day possessing millions of

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readers, in humble acknowledgment of the many hours they have whiled away by the creations of their sprightly fancy, arrayed in the matchless melody of their tuneful verse. But mankind must have an idol, one who monopolizes their admiration and devotion. The name of Shakspeare has swallowed up that of his predecessors, contemporaries, and successors; thousands, tens of thousands echo his name that never heard of Marlow,—Marlow, to whom Shakspeare himself condescended to be indebted, and whose conception of the character of Faust is precisely that of Goëthe;—of Webster, Marston, Randolph, Cartwright, May, and all that singular knot of dramatists, who unite the greatest beauties with the greatest deformities, and whose genius has sunk under the licentiousness of the age in which it was their misfortune to live. The names of Massinger, Ben Jonson, Beaumont and Fletcher are, it is true, more familiar; but it is only their names and one or two of their pieces that are generally known. These last have been preserved, not on the score of their superior beauties, but because they afforded an opportunity for Garrick and other great performers to reap laurels which belonged to the poet, by the exhibition of some striking character. Far be it from us to attempt to detract from the fame of Shakspeare. Superior he is, beyond doubt, to all his countrymen who went before or came after him, in the peculiar walk of his genius; but he is not so immeasurably superior as to cast all others into oblivion; and to us it seems almost a disgrace to England that a large portion of her own

readers, and a still larger of foreigners, seem ignorant that she ever produced more than one dramatist.

But "Go ahead! go ahead!" cries the impatient reader, who, in honest truth, hath been spoiled by being of late too much indulged in high-seasoned dainties and marvellous adventures treading on the heels of each other like the ranks of an undisciplined militia; and, obedient to his high behest, we resume our story.

The early spring of the west, where no cutting, villanous easterly winds, no cold, white, chilling, sea-born fogs that come, like winding-sheets, to wrap the wasting victim of consumption in the last garment, delay the opening buds and opening flowers,—the early spring now peeped forth from under the little blue wild violets and pale snowdrops, to see if perchance that old hoary tyrant Winter had packed up his "plunder," and gone about his business. The redbirds and the paroquets exhibited their gay plumage among the opening purple buds; and the life-current of nature, released from its frosty chains, began again to flow through the veins of the forest. It was the season for making maple sugar, a rural festival, which was at the period we speak of, and we hope still is, the signal for rural pastimes and innocent recreation.

The luscious breath of the balmy air, which awakened the flowers, the buds, and the birds; which set the insects humming in the sunshine, and invited the stiffened fly to come and solace himself in the south window, called forth the villagers to this their favourite amusement.

The colonel, Mrs. Dangerfield, Virginia, the pestilent Mrs. Judith, and one and all, arrayed themselves for the yearly saccharine saturnalia, where etiquette and precedence abided far away, and all were left to the guidance of that natural delicacy which, except among fools and blackguards, is always sufficient for the preservation of a due decorum. That last remnant of the Virginia aristocracy, the great Pompey Ducklegs, whose legs, in sooth, were every year getting more and more into a waddle, insomuch that it became apparent they would soon suffice but for the last long journey,—Pompey the elder did forthwith summon Pompey the younger to the field, and bade him exert himself for the honour of the family. Nay, the veritable Mr. Littlejohn, of whom we reproach ourselves that we have so long lost sight, did gather himself together with a mighty effort, and with an effort still mightier did rise up from the three chairs whereon it was his wont to repose the outward man.

The trees were tapped; the sweet redundant juices of the maple-trees began to flow into the little wooden troughs; the fires were lighted, the kettles filled with sap, and the respectable matrons presided with dignity and skill over the process of boiling it into sirup, skimming the refuse scum, and lastly crystallizing the pure residuum —may Heaven pardon us such a word when on a subject so simple! This process lasted until night, and then the forest glowed in the artificial sunshine of the ruddy fires, and the echoes answered from their long quiet abodes to the sound of song, laughter, and merriment. We

confess we wish we had been there to taste this the sweetest of all sugars, and to share in the blameless pastime; for if there is a spot on the ragged garment of human existence which the stain of guilt or remorse has not incurably soiled, it is these moments of innocent relaxation in which we envy none, hate none, injure none, and the heart expands to a holy affection for nature and her great inspiring, creating, preserving Spirit.

Bushfield, too, was here in all his glory, and was not only a whole team, but a team and a half, good measure, as he affirmed. This was the only occasion in which he did not eschew a crowd, saving and excepting a barbecue. He frisked about from one fire to the other, played his practical jokes on Pompey the Great and Pompey the Little, and roused the echoes of the forest with his noisy vivacity. Even the stern inflexible gravity of the Black Warrior relaxed under the influence of the scene; and it is said, though we can hardly believe it, that he actually degenerated into a laugh at seeing Bushfield by gentle violence enforce Mrs. Judith Paddock to attempt a waltz with him, of which he had heard a description from Rainsford, and at the end of which he jumped up as high as a young sapling.

To sum up all and close the rural festival, certain blooming young damsels—we would they had been shepherdesses!—and certain lusty youth—O that they were only shepherds, like those of Sicily, of whom Theocritus has sung, and whose sheepskin inexpressibles he hath immortalized!—certain youths and damsels of the

village, inspired by the breath of spring, the example of the little birds, and the little rural abstract rambles they occasionally indulged in the wicked twilight of the woods, were enticed to fall in love and pledge their faith for ever in presence of the dryads and hamadryads, who discreetly promised never to betray them. But there were no secrets where Mrs. Judith Paddock abided, and in less than four-and-twenty hours after these "gentle passages of arms" there was not a soul in the village of Dangerfieldville ignorant that the temple of Hymen would soon receive at least half a dozen pairs of votaries fresh from the festival of the sugar making. Were we inclined to philosophize on the mystifications of the human heart, we might here inquire into that singular affinity which beyond all doubt subsists between the making of sugar and the making of love, two of the sweetest occupations of this world. But we shall leave this to some future work, wherein we purpose to demonstrate that maple sugar is maple sugar, and love, love; for the doing of which the gentle reader will be doubtless greatly obliged to us, seeing that such is the astonishing development of science, philosophy, and all that sort of thing, that we ourselves begin to doubt the postulatum of the learned Theban Touchstone, that "ipse is he," that love *is* love, or that maple sugar *is* maple sugar.

CHAPTER II.

An evening walk, an evening talk, and what followed.

RAINSFORD did not enter his appearance at the woodland festival; he had gone over to his house, under pretence of making preparations for his removal. Virginia, though she kept up her spirits tolerably since their last interview, felt a heavy weight on her heart, and fell into that state of mind which inclines to lonely meditations. One evening she wandered alone down to the river-side, not to enjoy the opening charms of spring and the rural beauties of the scene, but to brood over past times and future probabilities. The season and the prospect which spread itself out before her were both equally alluring. On the opposite shore of the river the high and haughty precipices of dark-coloured rocks threw their deep reflections upon the bosom of the clear waters that here, in consequence of their expansion, rested quietly in their capacious basin. The upper line of these everlasting walls, viewed from where she stood, reared itself high in the air, and nothing was seen beyond or above them but the pure blue sky of evening. As the sun gradually sank to the horizon, it appeared a blood-red ball of flame; and when half hidden behind the massy barrier of the stream, assumed the appearance of a great signal fire, such as in ancient times gave

token for the valleys and the hills of Old Scotland, the land of cakes, the land of Burns and of Walter Scott, to send forth their hardy denizens to the dangers they loved to encounter. The shore on that side where reposed the village of Dangerfieldville was a low rich bottom, as it is yclept in western phrase. A fellow with some geology in his brain would call it alluvial; but we confess we delight to speak to the comprehension of ordinary readers, whom it is our pleasure to please. It was such a little paradise as whilom the shepherds haunted in the pastorals once so admired, but now eschewed as fantastic pictures of a state of society which never had an existence. So much the worse, so much the worse; for to us it seems that the very *beau ideal* of human happiness would consist in this imaginary union (if such a one were possible) of all the simplicity of rural innocence, all the mild excitements of rural scenes, rural amusements, and rural occupations, with gentle manners and intellectual refinement. It says nothing in favour of the state of manners or morals, when the human mind can only be excited to feeling or enthusiasm by high-coloured pictures of passion and guilt, or high-seasoned temptations to folly and crime.

The general character of the scene we have attempted to describe was that of silence and repose. But ever and anon a boat would glide down the stream, and the silence be interrupted for a few moments by the laugh or song of the boatmen, or the echoes roused by the most touching of all music, in the proper scene and season,—the windings of the mellow wooden

trumpet, which those who have once heard, on the lonely rivers of the south and west, will, peradventure, never forget. No hunter's horn, no inspiring bugle, no oaten reed of shepherd piping among the fauns and dryads in Grecian or Sicilian vale, ever sent forth such mellow, melting sounds, as we have heard in days of yore, rolling in fleecy volumes from the simple wooden trumpet of a river Orpheus, black as the petticoat of night, when not a star watches in the dingy firmament.

Virginia's eyes were on the scene, but her thoughts were far away. It is scarcely necessary to say whither they were wandering, or whether they were pleasant or painful. Such as they were, they were suddenly interrupted by the sound of footsteps, and the appearance of a person she at once recognised as the identical being who was at that moment in the entire occupation of her mind. She started, and was offended.

"Mr. Rainsford," said she, "after what has passed, I did not think—I did not wish ever to see you again." And she was proceeding towards home with a hurried step.

"Virginia—Miss Dangerfield, forgive me for wishing to see you once more. I am going away to-morrow. I shall never return, and I —I don't know whether I shall be more happy or miserable for the indulgence, but I wished to bid you farewell; and to part in peace with one with whom I have lived till lately in peace."

"Well, sir, in peace let us part; though I must be allowed to say, your intruding into our

peaceful village, and accepting the hospitality of my father; and, and—but of myself, I will say nothing. I ask, if you think all this was not, in the circumstances under which you came here, dishonourable and infamous?"

"Yes, yes, it was so,—I confess, I know it was so. I had no right, wretched being that I am, I had no right to endeavour to make an interest in the affections, or create an attachment in the heart of any human being; living, as I do, in the horrible anticipation, nay, the horrible certainty of one day giving nothing but pain to those who take an interest in my fate."

"You should have thought of this before, Mr. Rainsford."

"I should—nay, I did. But think, Virginia, when a man has no friends, no relatives, not a soul that takes an interest in his fate; when he has buried all he loves, all that love him; when he loathes the sight, and shuns the society of his early companions, and roves a wretched wreck of body and mind, in the vast solitude of the world, without rudder, or compass, or haven of repose. Think, Virginia, what must be the self-denial of that man who, under such circumstances, could resist the kindness of benevolent strangers. And yet, you may remember I sought not your father's hospitality."

"I know it—I know it. But, when you knew that you had no claim, you ought not to have accepted it," replied Virginia, whom the sad picture Rainsford had drawn of himself softened almost into forgiveness. "But it is useless to say more, or to prolong this interview.

Whatever may have been your offences to me and mine, I forgive them. You saved my life; I cannot forget that. And may the great Being you have offended so deeply, receive the gift of life you bestowed on me as an atonement for that of which you deprived another.

Rainsford looked aghast.

"Deprived another! What do you—what can you mean, Virginia?"

"Your conscience will tell you what I cannot utter."

"Conscience! upon my soul I do not comprehend you!" Yet Rainsford trembled all the while with a secret consciousness.

"Must I speak? must I remind you of your own confession?" cried she, impatiently.

"No, Virginia, there is no necessity for that, it is never out of my mind for a moment, asleep or awake. It haunts my very dreams, and makes my nights ten thousand times more miserable than my days! But still I cannot comprehend what you said just now."

"Hypocrite!—then if I must, I must. Answer me," turning full upon him, "answer me, Mr. Rainsford; have you not confessed yourself a murderer!" And she shuddered with loathing, as she uttered that appalling word.

"Murderer! ha, ha, ha!" and he laughed aloud. "No, no, thank Heaven, not yet, not yet. Whatever I may be, in good time—"

"Wretched man!"

"Yes, I am wretched, but I am not a murderer. Ha, ha, ha! what a high opinion you have of me. Add thief and pickpocket, seducer—madman to it, Virginia, to make up the

sum total of my accomplishments; do, do, Virginia!"

Virginia shuddered, with mingled emotions of disgust and horror, as he continued in a more composed manner.

"Miss Dangerfield, what you have just said convinces me of the propriety of my making certain explanations which you declined to hear once, but which I demand as an act of justice you should listen to now. Come, come, you must, you shall hear me. You shall hear what never was and never will be disclosed by me again to any human being voluntarily. Come, sit down on this old gray rock, and listen to what I shall say. It is worth the hearing, I promise you."

Virginia could no longer resist; she sat down, trembling with emotion, and, leaning against a huge tree that grew out of the side of the rock, awaited what followed.

"Well, sir, go on, and let me hear it all."

"Virginia, there is madness in my blood and race!"

"Madness! Oh, God! Madness?"

"Be not alarmed; there is no danger yet awhile at least. I will not harm you, dear, kind, benevolent soul, though you did suspect me of murder."

"Did you not acknowledge it?"

"No, on my soul! But I now see into the source of your mistake, and will remove it if you will listen calmly to my story.

"I am the last of my family, and so much the better, for when I am gone its name and memory will be for ever buried in the rubbish

of its own miserable ruins. Virginia! Virginia! I have undertaken a task which I fear will accelerate the catastrophe which haunts my imagination every moment of my life."

"Only assure me solemnly of your innocence, and I will spare you the rest."

"No, all shall be disclosed, now that I have wrought myself to the task. I said I was the last of my family; but that is the lot of thousands,—a vulgar calamity not worth thinking or talking of. All men die; all generations, names, families, nations, the peopled millions of the universe, all pass away; but to die as mine have done, as I shall die,—there's the rub, Virginia, there's the rub! My family was respectable and rich, so rich that fortune seemed determined to make all the amends she could for the curse denounced upon them by fate—ay, fate, Virginia! do you not believe in fate? It is but another, a profane name for Providence. Ha! ha! It is astonishing what a difference the world makes in the same things called by different names! But we were rich and well educated; we had every outward means of enjoyment; and yet, for almost fifty years never has there existed a more wretched, hopeless race on the face of the earth. The story goes—it may be true, or it may be false—but the story goes —and it has had an influence over our family that while one of them remains alive will never cease. It was said that our grandfather, who was a loyalist in the revolutionary war, in some battle, no matter where, encountered an old gray-headed neighbour, a whig, who surrendered him his sword, and cried out for quarter.

My grandfather was in that state of bloodthirsty excitement which is so often felt in the heat of battle, and, without listening to his entreaties, cut him across the head till he sank to the ground. 'I know you, squire,' cried he, as he fell. Some years after, when he was settled on his estate, which he received with his wife, and had a family around him, it chanced that an old beggar came up the avenue, and asked charity in an incoherent manner, which indicated derangement of mind. He was somewhat insolent, and my grandfather roughly ordered him away.

"'You are a kind-hearted gentleman,' said the old man; 'what might your name be?'

"'It's of no consequence to you; go away, old man.'

"'Yes, but it is. I like to know the names of my benefactors, that I may pray for them.'

"My grandfather ordered him away; but before he left the court-yard he learned from a servant his name, and returned, and stood right before him; he lifted up his old ragged hat, and displayed a head seamed with scars, ill concealed by a few white hairs.

"'Do you see this old head, major? and how it is marked, as if the plough had been over it? You don't remember me; but I do you. Do you know whose sword it was that made these gashes?'

"My grandfather was about going away, when he cried out,—

"'Stop, major; it's impolite to turn your back on an old acquaintance. Don't you remember a gray-headed soldier who asked you

for quarter, and you cut him down like an old rotten cabbage? My name is Rockwell—Amos Rockwell; we were neighbours once, before you removed to these parts.'

"My grandfather remembered the man and the circumstance, and immediately offered him all the reparation in his power, a home for the rest of his life. But his mind began to wander, and he no longer understood what was said to him.

"'A tory, a tory is a highway robber, and I'll prove it,' and he fell into incoherent nonsense. Before he departed, however, he came close up to my grandfather, and said,

"'Do you know, major, I'm a fortune-teller? I get my bread by it now. I'll tell yours for a shilling; I would not be in your place for all you are worth and ten times more. I'm pretty mad sometimes, they say, but you'll be ten times worse before you die; you'll be a mad family among you, and I could find in my heart to pity you, if it wasn't that you cut open my head when I asked for quarter, and let in so much air that it has been like a bladder ever since. Good-by, I shall be this way again one of these days to see if you're mad, and if you are we'll have a merry time of it.'

"He left my grandfather somewhat struck with this strange medley of sense and nonsense, for he was a man of nervous temperament, and subject to fits of low spirits. It passed away, however, or only occurred at long intervals, when accident or association would bring the incident of the old beggar to his mind. About

the same time next year he returned again, and on encountering my grandfather, exclaimed,

"'What, not mad yet? well, you've got only two years more to run, and then we'll have our frolic out.'

"This second visit had a sensible effect, as I have heard, on my grandfather, who had in the interim lost one of his two children. But when he again returned the third time, my grandfather was seriously shocked.

"'You've one more year of grace,' said he, 'and then, if I live, you and I will set out on our travels together to see the world, and knock our noddles together, for yours will be as empty as mine soon, or I can't see into a millstone.'

"It was foredoomed that the thing should happen, and the beggar was only the instrument of fate in giving the warning. It was a sort of retributive justice that he should be permitted to become the messenger of Providence, as well as the agent in assisting to bring about what was to come to pass at all events. My grandfather brooded over these warnings until he could think of nothing else, and his nervous predisposition received new force by the sudden death of his wife, which calamity left him with no other solace than a little weakly son about four years old. The neighbourhood was solitary; no one lived within less than two or three miles; the nearest building was an old half-ruined church, which had the reputation of being haunted, and whose moss-grown tombstones stood as thick as the trees of the forest. By day it was sufficiently cheerful; but the

stillness of the night, interrupted only by the drowsy hum of insects, the croaking of frogs, and the occasional night music of the owl and whip-poor-will, presented a sort of void for the imagination to people with spectres of its own creation.

"My grandfather gradually grew visionary and melancholy. He became a devotee; he became a fanatic; he—he ran mad, and raised his hand against that life to which he himself had given being! He was confined in a cell, and dashed—"

Here the young man paused, panting, wiping his forehead, down which the big drops rolled their way, and exhibiting the intensity of mental suffering. Virginia could not speak; wonder, doubt, superstition for the first time overwhelmed her imagination, and she shuddered at the anticipation of unknown inscrutable horrors. After a few moments he went on.

"My father grew up an intelligent, well-principled, virtuous man; married; was blessed—ah! luckily for him he did not live to see two sons, *aye*, *three*, grow up to be the curse of his existence. My father,—but why should I dwell on such soul-sickening scenes and recollections? his story in its catastrophe is that of my grandfather, and let it rest in oblivion. Now, Virginia, now comes the whirlwind and the earthquake; now the curse begins to approach me nearer and nearer, until I feel the grasp of fate about my throat. We, I and my two elder brothers, often thought and often shuddered over the fate of our father and grandfather, the latter of which some foolish or malignant peo-

ple detailed to us. But we felt no apprehensions for ourselves, although it was observed by some of our friends that we were all inclined more or less to melancholy and superstition, as *they* called it; but I know better now, and have another name for it, PRESENTIMENT.

"We lived together, and loved each other, until my elder brother began to, to—spare me, spare me the detail, Virginia; it is time for me to conclude, or I shall go mad *before my time.* It is sufficient, it must be sufficient to say, that my dear brothers, one after the other, precisely at the same age, under the same circumstances, and under the same influence of a gloomy anticipation of the fate which every succeeding victim more surely marked was sooner or later to become his own, followed the footsteps of my grandfather and father, and died, and made no sign of having once belonged to the race of miserable inheritors of a curse which goes by the name of a glorious privilege. I, I alone remain; there is none other; no grandfather, father, or brothers to run distracted, but me; the vial of wrath has no other head but mine to pour out upon. The hour approaches; the next birthday, and then, then you must take care of me, Virginia. I shall be dangerous, especially to those I love, as I do thee, dear woman of my heart. At this moment I dare to tell thee so, for I feel like one that, having disclosed the inmost secret of his soul, cares not who knows all the rest. Yes, I, I the wretched inheritor of curses that have never fallen to the ground; I that can bring you nothing but a benediction of horrors; I that ought to be

howling among the wild beasts, or the still wilder cells and dungeons of my kind; I dare to tell thee so, Virginia.

"When my last brother kill—died, I could not stay any longer in a place where I was looked upon by the people as a victim marked out by destiny; as a sort of mysterious object of the wrath of Heaven. I sold my estate, and bent my way to some spot where I and my story should never have been heard of, and where I might be looked upon as a fellow-creature by my fellow-creatures. A distant hope likewise animated me at times, that possibly change of scene, change of air, change of life, together with the absence of every thing that could give to my mind the fatal direction of all my family, might relieve me for a while from the besetting fiend. At a distance, and when doubtful whither to go, I heard of this village, and of the character of your father. I came hither; I found a welcome, friends, all, and more than I ever expected to find in this world; and for a little while I hoped to be at least as happy as others of my fellow-creatures. But I feel it is all in vain; I have a presentiment which never yet deceived me, but is as sure as fate itself, and which assures me that my hours are numbered. Hah, hah, hah! isn't this a romantic tale for a fair lady's ear; a touching appeal from a thriving wooer to his lady love? am not I irresistible, Virginia? hah, hah, hah!"

"Don't laugh; don't laugh, for God's sake!" cried the young maiden.

"What, you'd rather hear me howl, and

gnash my teeth, and rattle my chains, and chatter nonsense? Well, perhaps it would be more in character."

Virginia soothed him by degrees into something like composure.

"The anticipation of misery, after all, is better than the consciousness of guilt. I am thankful that it is no worse."

"But how could you believe for a moment the absurd tale of murder?" asked he, reproachfully.

"Did not you yourself contribute to deceive me?"

"Perhaps I did. I could not know what was passing in your mind, nor you in mine. If you knew how I shrink from the idea that any human being should suspect the cause of my melancholy, and that my apprehensions are for ever fixed to that one single point, you would easily conceive why I took it for granted you alluded to no other. In the same manner I was deceived by Paddock's suspicions, and bribed him, not to conceal a crime, but a misfortune."

"And I, misled by the turn given by Mrs. Judith to your violent emotions and ambiguous exclamations, mistook your confession of one thing for that of another. You will pardon me, I hope?" said she, with a melancholy smile.

"If you will pardon me for daring to attempt to establish an interest in the hearts of a worthy family, who, if they cherish any regard for me, must one day mourn over my fate. But let me again remind you what it is to be an out-

cast, an exception to our fellow-creatures; to wander through the peopled solitudes of the world, a guest only at the tables of strangers; to go and come, without a soul caring whither or when; and to receive no sympathy from a human being. Such was my case when I came here, and was received with a kind hospitality that went to my heart. I could not for the soul of me resist it at first, or resign it afterwards. Will you forgive me for cheating you into friendship for one who is destined to repay it with bitter recollections, perhaps with something worse?" and he shuddered with some gloomy anticipation that passed over his mind, as he added, "I shall leave you to-morrow. You must never witness it."

"Witness what?" asked Virginia, anxiously.

"You must never see me gradually stripped of my mind's regalia, the attributes of godlike man, one by one. To see me hate those I loved; to see me sit brooding over one single miserable anticipation, which will grow and grow from hour to hour, and day to day, until it becomes a gigantic spectre so horrible that reason turns away from it shuddering, and takes refuge in madness. To see me wandering about like a wild beast, the enemy of all and feared by all, until at last, like the wolf or the tiger, I am caught, and chained, and shut from the light of heaven. I will spare you this, Virginia, and depart to some place where no one knows or cares who or what I am; where, when the crisis arrives, I may howl without piercing the ear, and die without wounding the hearts of my friends."

The deep melancholy of his voice, as he drew this appalling picture, touched the heart of Virginia, and drew tears from her eyes. Though her feelings towards Rainsford had been restrained from giving way to the violence of love, they had long passed the boundaries of mere ordinary friendship. She certainly preferred him far above any man she had ever seen, which indeed was no great compliment, she had seen so few. But the capricious changes in his conduct and temper, joined to the melancholy gloom which so often overspread his countenance, while it excited her interest, created doubts and suspicions, which prevented that unbounded confidence necessary to the very existence of love in the heart of a sensible and virtuous woman.

The disclosure just made, had invested him with a strange inexplicable interest, where pity was coupled with a kind of vague indefinite fear. Sometimes as her fancy realized the picture he had drawn of himself in anticipation, she would shrink from him with trembling apprehension; while at others when he presented the fair reality of an amiable handsome youth, with a mind stored with all the richness of past and present times; a voice of touching melody; an eye which in his happier moments was yet more eloquent than his tongue, and a heart that not only seemed pure and good, but was all hers; then she felt that soft and yielding influence which prompts the pure virgin to wish to join her fate with some chosen one, and share his joys or sorrows in the journey through this world.

A silence of some minutes was at length interrupted by the wild quaver of a screech-owl, from the dark precipice on the opposite shore of the river. It broke on the dead silence of the evening with a tone so shrill, so cold, and cheerless, that it is not to be wondered at that superstition has connected it with its other regalia of horrors. The favourite haunts of this invisible bird are deep woods, mouldering ruins, and churchyards. He lives among the dead, and his sunshine is the obscurity of utter darkness. He sees when others of the cheerful denizens of the air are blind; he sallies out of his sepulchre in some old hollow tree, to screech and scream his funeral warnings under the windows of the startled peasant, when all the rest of the feathered race are enjoying their innocent repose among the whispering leaves of the forest.

The scream was so shrill, and broke so abruptly on the deathlike repose of nature, that it made Virginia, who was accustomed to the sound, start from the revery into which she had fallen.

"Let us go home," said she.

"A few moments. That is my music, Virginia; it is a prophetic song. Don't you think that screech-owls see into futurity?"

"Certainly not, for then they would be wiser than rational beings."

"Rational beings! what is reason but a proud temple built on the sands, to be overthrown by the first blast that whistles by? I can understand that owl as well as if he spoke English. He is telling me—hark!"

Another long shrill quaver came over the still waters.

"Hark! dost thou know what he is saying, Virginia? He tells me to make the most of the present moments; to enjoy thy dear society in all its full fruition of delight; to listen to the music of thy voice, to hear thee breathe so softly on the night; to exchange with thee the rich treasures of thy mind, for the miserable counterfeit coin of mine, for the last, last time, for to-morrow, nay, this night we are to part for ever. There is truth in owls, you may depend upon it."

"Let us go home," again said Virginia, rising.

"A little longer, Virginia, for the prophet over yonder says it is the last time. Come, look with me once more at this lovely work of Nature's cunning hand. It has a moral; it is prophetic, too, like the owl. The pure sky up yonder is a mirror in which we may see if we view aright the reflection of our future days. Every human being has a star there, which sparkles forth his history and his fate. My planet is the moon; she does not shine now, as if to indicate my light of joy and hope will be extinguished this night. But the river, the river, that is your true prophet. See how its waves roll quietly away! not one drop will ever return; and so with me. They find their way into the ocean of waters, and are lost for ever; I shall return to the ocean of the world, and the kindest wish that I can ever breathe for thee, Virginia, is, that my name, my fate, my very memory may be lost in oblivion."

Virginia paused, and was silent a few moments; she then said, with faltering hesitation,

"Why should you go to-morrow, or indeed go at all?"

"Have you not driven me away, Virginia?"

"That was when I believed you guilty, and hated you."

"And now you *pity* me!" said Rainsford, with bitterness. "You look upon me as a rare monster, something out of the ordinary sphere of mankind; and wonder at me as the boys do at a mad beggar in the streets."

"No, on my soul I don't, Mr. Rainsford."

"Give me the proof, then," cried he, vehemently; "I love you, Virginia; I have told you so before. If any human being can chase away the fiend that haunts my reason and my fancy day and night, it is you. To know that you are interested in my happiness; to know that I have a watchful cherub praying for and shielding me from fate itself by her purity and virtue, will, if it is not irrevocably decreed otherwise, redeem me from the fate of all my family. Now, Virginia, to try thee! darest thou promise, darest thou pledge the purity of thine immortal soul to me; me, standing on the brink of a yawning gulf, and dizzy with looking down upon it; darest thou promise me—'Sdeath! what a selfish scoundrel I am! no, no, it is decreed; I *must* go."

"Mr. Rainsford," said Virginia, with a sad, yet firm solemnity mingled with tenderness; "Mr. Rainsford, I think I know what you are going to say; say on, and be assured that what a woman sensible of her duty to her parents

and herself, tenderly sensible of her obligations to you, and of the claim you have on her gratitude, ought to do, can do, that will I do with all my heart."

"Well then, Virginia, if it should please the great Giver of life and reason to spare me the bitter draught which all my race have drank and died of—if I should pass the fated period, and, having passed, I shall not fear it afterwards—will you, dearest Virginia, *can* you consent to share my fortune with me, to become the chosen blessing to repay me for all I have suffered in this world? Answer me, frankly and finally."

"With the approbation of my parents I will," replied she, after a pause, and hesitatingly.

"Ha! your father and mother! true, true, they must know it; they must know all, and shrink from me as all others who knew my history, save you, have done, Virginia. I cannot bear to be made a spectacle, an object of horrible commiseration, of mingled scorn and pity; to have every word, and look, and action scanned with jealous scrutiny, and distorted into an indication of approaching alienation of mind. No, no, dearest Virginia, be you the only depository of my secret; do not be kind by halves; give all or nothing."

Virginia hesitated; but, moved at length by his forlorn and hapless state, she promised not to betray the confidence of that evening.

"A thousand thanks, dearest, most beneficent Virginia. I shall now have something to live for, and, instead of for ever brooding over the dark vista of the future, which hitherto has pre-

sented to me nothing but spectres of horror, look forward to the hope that, under the guidance of an angel, and shielded by her wings, I may yet live to taste that happiness which has been an alien to my heart ever since the dreadful conviction was implanted in it, that I should go the way of all that I loved or that ever loved me."

"May the gracious Providence ordain it so."

"Virginia," resumed he, with a solemn earnestness, "Virginia, permit me here to seal the compact on the sacred purity of thy balmy lips, the first and the last time, unless the new vision that has just dawned upon me should be realized. For here I solemnly swear, in presence of all those silent witnesses that sparkle yonder, never to take, never to ask of you any one of those sweet condescensions which virtuous delicacy may blamelessly bestow on true affection, until I can claim, and you can grant with a perfect confidence, that last and greatest blessing of possessing you. My spotless, pure Virginia shall never run the risk of having her future life poisoned by the recollection of the endearments of one who some day may be clanking his chains in a dungeon. Come, thou dear one; the first, and perhaps the last."

The maiden yielded a modest compliance, and one kiss, one embrace was given and received in silence; one kiss and one embrace sealed the communion of weal and wo. They returned together, and Virginia was at once reminded of the rashness of the promise of secrecy she had just made by the inquiring

looks of her mother, and the cool salutation of Colonel Dangerfield. She longed to throw herself on the maternal bosom, and disclose all that had passed.

CHAPTER III.

A half-confidence is worse than none, which is not the case with half a loaf of bread.

Much of the succeeding night was passed by Virginia in wakeful anxiety. She did not regret the engagement just entered into, but it weighed heavily on her heart. There was a fearful responsibility attending it, a risk so much greater than even that which ever accompanies the surrender of our happiness to the keeping of another, that she almost shuddered when it presented itself in the solitude of reflection and darkness. Yet there was something of touching and exquisite tenderness in the idea of watching over the welfare of one so circumstanced as Rainsford; a thrilling gratification in the hope that he might yet, under her gentle pilotage, steer clear of the rock on which his family had all been wrecked, one after the other. She resolved to watch over him, as a mother over a sickly child; to devote herself as far as might be, to his amusement; and to lure him, if possible, from his bitter customary contemplations, by holding up a glass which should reflect the future in fairer and more alluring colours.

When she met the family in the morning, the colonel saluted her, as usual, with a kiss, but not precisely such a kiss as she had been ac-

customed to receive; and Mrs. Dangerfield discovered, in the timid consciousness with which Virginia poured out the tea, that she had something on her mind she did not dare to disclose. "But she will tell it the first opportunity," thought the good mother; "for she has never yet had any secrets from me." Virginia, however, did not tell her the first opportunity, and her maternal anxiety was awakened to a watchfulness she never thought necessary before.

Rainsford now visited more frequently, and it was plain to Virginia that the hope which animated him had a most favourable influence on his mind and spirits. He indulged himself in occasional humorous sallies, displayed various indications of gentlemanly accomplishments, which hitherto he had not the heart to draw forth, and sometimes spread his wings in such almost fearful flights of fancy, that he seemed to be just hovering over the confines of rational perception. She shuddered, she thrilled, and she admired; but it was with that feeling with which we behold the seaboy toppling high on the topgallant-mast in a tempest, or the gambols of a thoughtless child on the verge of a precipice. In a little time, however, the perpetual watchfulness she practised gradually produced a feeling in the tender and virtuous heart of Virginia, which partook almost equally of the warmth of a mistress, the untiring, sleepless, holy, guardian care of a mother. It could hardly be called love that she felt; there was too great an infusion of anxiety, of care; too much of solemnity to admit of the buoyant bubbles which float on the surface of the sweet-

est draught of human bliss, when love and hope form its only ingredients.

The colonel and Mrs. Dangerfield could not but notice what was passing; and though the supervision of parents over their children, more especially their daughters, is not so rigid and watchful in this country, nor, happily for us, so necessary, as in many others, still the former could not refrain from occasional hints, nay, surmises, about young ladies having their own secrets, and being too wise to consult their parents on the most important occasions of their lives. The mother said nothing; but in the language of the most beautiful, the most natural, and the most affecting of all ballads ever written, Virginia might have said, as she felt,—

"She look'd in my face, till I thought my heart would break."

The situation of the daughter became every day more and more painful, and she at length threw herself on the generosity of Rainsford, to be relieved from her obligation of secrecy.

"I cannot live in this way much longer. I have never before had a secret from my parents, and the thought of living every day in their sight, sharing their affections, receiving their bounty, and having that in my heart which I dare not, or at least am not permitted, to disclose, sickens me of my life. I cannot look them in the face without a consciousness that sinks my eyes to the ground, and they know it. I can disclose our engagement without—without betraying your—the reasons for postponing—I—I—you know what I wish to say, though I cannot say it."

Rainsford struggled with his feelings for a while, and then answered,—

"Virginia, I will not be the cause of more suffering to your gentle spirit than *must* be the inevitable result of our engagement, for a time at least, until—until my fate is decided. But consider, dearest girl, that unless you tell all, you will still have a secret—and such a secret!"

"Yes, but my heart will be relieved from its heaviest burthen, a wilful, unnecessary denial of confidence. Cannot I tell *my* secret without exposing yours?"

Again Rainsford struggled with his insuperable horror of disclosing, or consenting to any measure that might possibly lead to a disclosure of his family history. But the generosity of his nature at length overcame the selfish feeling, and he consented that she should tell all, and in her own way. "But," added he, "I foresee that it will lead to our everlasting separation."

Virginia sought her mother, sat down to her sewing, made sad work of it, pricked her finger, and screamed a little, as young ladies are wont.

"What is the matter?" asked the old lady, pushing her spectacles up on her forehead.

"My dear mother, I have a secret to tell you. O dear, how I have pricked my finger!"

"Is that your great secret, Virginia?"

"No, indeed, mother; but—but what do you think of Mr. Rainsford? Dear me, how my finger bleeds!"

"Why, I think Mr. Rainsford is in love with Virginia Dangerfield, and that she is not much behindhand with him."

"Lord, mother, how can you talk so? But what a fool I am!" She approached her mother, threw her arms about her neck, kissed her, and wept. But soon drying her tears, she began, with the dignified firmness of a virtuous maid, conscious that in disclosing the inmost secrets of her soul she had no occasion to blush or be ashamed. Frankly and fairly she told her engagement; but at the same time, being determined not to betray the history confided to her by Rainsford, unless it should become absolutely necessary to her peace of mind, she merely stated that their union was not to take place until the expiration of a certain period, and not then without the entire approbation of her parents.

"A certain period! and how long first, Virginia?"

"Why, that—that depends on circumstances beyond Mr. Rainsford's control at present."

"And what are they, my daughter?"

"I cannot disclose them, dear madam, as yet."

"You say—that is, he says, he is wealthy, of age, his own master; why should he wish to delay his marriage to an indefinite period?"

"That is a secret."

"I don't like secrets, my dear, nor postponements, without some good, sufficient, avowed reasons. I have no objection to Mr. Rainsford; indeed, since the obligation he conferred upon us all, I have wished that he might like you, and you him. But I cannot help thinking his conduct somewhat singular. Do *you* know his reasons, Virginia?"

"I do."

"And you dare not disclose them? Perhaps he will not permit you?"

"He has consented, if it should be absolutely necessary. But I—I confess, my dear mother, I had rather, and so would he, that they should be secret for a time. One day you shall know all. Either I will tell you, or—or circumstances will disclose it." And she sighed at the possibility that the latter might come to pass.

Mrs. Dangerfield shook her head.

"Virginia, I dislike the whole course of your wooing. Deceit is too often at the bottom of mystery. I cannot help suspecting that he is playing on the simplicity of your character, if not betraying the tenderness of your affections."

"Oh! no, indeed, mother; if you only knew all you would pity him, as I do." And she cast herself on the mother's bosom, and sobbed as if her heart would break the while.

"Forgive me, dear mother!"

"I do forgive you, Virginia; but your father must know all this; and now I think of it, he has not for a long time past appeared to treat Mr. Rainsford as a man like him seems to have a right to be treated by one on whom he has conferred so great an obligation. Have you any objection I should tell him?"

"None; I wished you to do so; and I should have told you all that you now know some time ago, but that Mr. Rainsford exacted a promise of secrecy, from which he only just now released me."

"Again, another secret!" exclaimed Mrs. Dangerfield, and she remained musing for some

moments. "But yonder comes your father; we shall see what he thinks of all this. Had you rather remain or retire while we talk over the subject?"

"I think I'd better retire." Virginia went towards the door, but returned, and, taking her mother's hand, looked up in her face with a bewitching, beseeching eye. "You are not angry with me, dear mother?"

"No, indeed I am not, Virginia." She kissed her affectionately, and they separated.

The colonel received the communications of Mrs. Dangerfield with rather a bad grace. There was something mysterious about Rainsford. He had come among them without letters; and though the hospitable habits of Kentucky rendered them quite unnecessary in ordinary cases, still he must know more of him before he consented to give him his daughter. It was true he had saved her life, and that entailed upon them everlasting gratitude; but still this was not a sufficient guarantee to his fortune and character. His professed object in coming here was to purchase and settle; yet he seemed to have neither inclination, nor habits, nor any thing else necessary to the success of such a plan; nay, he appeared to have almost forgotten that he ever entertained it. Besides, from something he had learned a good while ago of Zeno Paddock, he could not help sometimes entertaining a vague suspicion, which, were it not for the unspeakable benefit he had conferred on them all, would have caused him, Colonel Dangerfield, to institute an inquiry, which, if not properly answered, would have led to a

cessation of all further intercourse, if to nothing more. He did not feel himself at liberty to state what Zeno had told him. In the first place, it might not be true, for the man was a great busybody, and did not always talk gospel; and in the second place, if true, it only amounted to a surmise rather than an absolute ground of suspicion.

"I must know more of this mysterious young man, whom, however, I can't help liking for his intelligence and amiable qualities, independently of the obligations of gratitude. My friendship is, and my purse would be, at his service if he required it; but he has a command of large funds, I know; yet, when it comes to giving away my only daughter, it is another affair, and requires every degree of rational circumspection. I shall not fail to take advantage of the first opportunity that presents itself to ask him some questions about himself and his family, which I have never done before, because I don't think it becoming in a gentleman born in Old Virginia, and residing in Kentucky, to be inquisitive about a guest. It looks as if he was not welcome for himself alone, as a fellow-creature, as a mere man. But this is another affair. I have sufficient confidence in Virginia not to forbid their intercourse or break their engagement; but the marriage shall never take place with my consent till I know who Mr. Rainsford is, whence he comes, what is his family, and, above all, what is his character. In the mean time I shall have an eye upon him, though I confess it goes to my conscience to suspect a man for an instant without telling

him so to his face, and giving him an opportunity of vindicating himself."

The reader will perhaps observe a change in the character and style of Colonel Dangerfield when he compares his conversation and conduct with certain dialogues and incidents recorded in the commencement of our story. It is even so. Change of situation, duties, and modes of life do not make less impression on the mind than they do on the body. From the moment the colonel parted with his estate, his neighbours, and above all with Barebones, and dashed into the wilderness, his character resumed that native sagacity and vigour which wealth, indulgence, and, above all, idleness, had lulled to sleep with their syren lullabies. His mind rose with the exigences of the occasion; and whether as a soldier braving the dangers and toils of a forest war, a magistrate ruling the wild region around him more by the force of his personal authority than that of the laws, a father instructing or providing for the wants of his children, or a husband fulfilling the duties of a household divinity, he was equally an example. His old friends on the borders of James River would hardly have known him now; and we ourselves, intimate as we were with this worthy gentleman, cannot help sometimes almost doubting his identity.

CHAPTER IV.

Showing how Mrs. Judith Paddock was almost frightened out of her wits.

VIRGINIA took the earliest opportunity of disclosing to Rainsford the particulars of the interview with her mother, and he expressed his grateful sense of her delicacy in withholding the secret which it had been the great object of his existence to preserve. But he foresaw, and he told her so, the painful situation in which he had placed her, and at times lamented that she had not made a full disclosure. From this period he imagined himself an object of jealous suspicion, and perverted every look, and word, and action of the colonel and Mrs. Dangerfield accordingly. Perhaps he was right; for though they preserved towards him all the appearance of outward courtesy, they could not divest themselves of that awkward embarrassment which is ever the product of the absence of confidence in those with whom we associate.

A few days had passed when, an opportunity presenting itself, Colonel Dangerfield took occasion to introduce the subject of the engagement which subsisted between Rainsford and Virginia.

"I will acknowledge, Mr. Rainsford, that all I have *seen* of you since you came to this part of the country has contributed to give me a fa-

vourable opinion of your talents and character, independently of the obligation you have conferred on me and mine. In other circumstances, and as an ordinary acquaintance, I should rest satisfied; but the relation in which you now stand towards my family makes it necessary that I should know more of you. You will therefore, I trust, not think me impertinent or curious if I now take the liberty of asking a few questions."

Though in general Rainsford was highly nervous and sensitive, there were occasions when he would rally himself into a lofty feeling of firmness and decision. In the latter spirit he replied,—

"Colonel Dangerfield, you certainly have a right to ask any questions you think necessary. I am sure they will be only such as your situation and mine render it proper for one gentleman to ask another. But I must tell you beforehand, there are questions which, *as yet*, I cannot, I do not feel disposed to answer."

"Very well; frankly, then, where have you generally resided before you came hither?"

"I cannot—I had rather be excused answering that question."

"Indeed! well, sir, may I ask the situation, circumstances, and character of your family?"

"I am the last of my family," said Rainsford, with a shudder.

"That is somewhat remarkable. I scarcely ever met a human being so utterly desolate as to be without relatives. You must have been very unfortunate. Are you a native of this country?"

"I am. I have some distant relatives, but have never associated or had any interchange of kindness with them."

"And you decline giving any information on the subject of your family or fortune?"

"My family—so far I will say—my family is respectable; and as to wealth, I have more than I shall ever have occasion for. The proofs I can produce at any time."

"I am not very solicitous on that point. But you must be aware, Mr. Rainsford, that I cannot give my only daughter away to a man who not only refuses to explain who he is, but chooses himself to propose delays, for which, though he has given her sufficient reasons, he does not condescend to explain to my satisfaction."

"Is not this very proposal of delay a proof that I mean neither to wrong or deceive either her or you? Did I intend this, I should hasten the completion of that happiness which I sometimes hope I may yet enjoy. Swindlers and villains fear nothing so much as time, which sooner or later lays open all secrets."

"True, that is assuredly true," replied the colonel, musing; "but still, Mr. Rainsford—I will be plain with you—still you must confess, if you know any thing of the world and of the intercourse of mankind, that the man who declines giving a reasonable solution to any course of conduct which is not within the sphere of ordinary motives and principles, justly lays himself open to a suspicion that his motives will not bear examination. It is not without

good reason that the great mass of mankind confound mystery with guilt."

"But, Colonel Dangerfield, may not there be misfortunes of such a peculiar and painful nature, that a sensitive being will shrink from disclosing them, as he would from the acknowledgment of a crime?"

"Certainly; but these instances are so rare, that no man has a right to complain if the world transforms this feeling of sore delicacy into the consciousness of guilt."

"Yes, I know that but too well."

"But, sir, to bring this home to ourselves: as strangers, we are not entitled to ask of you any disclosure that might be painful; as mere ordinary acquaintances, we would not wish it: but as the parents of a virtuous and, I must say, beautiful young woman, who has somewhat hastily intrusted her prospects of happiness to your future decision, I now inform you, once for all, that before the affair goes any further, we must and we will know who and what you are."

"I will tell you, in one word, a wretch; but not a guilty one. Colonel Dangerfield, do not take from me the hope of one day, if it please Heaven to spare me, calling Virginia mine. If you knew all, you would pity, perhaps you would shrink from me; it is that I fear, it is that which makes me shudder at the thought of laying open the sources of my conduct, the apparent mystery in which I have wrapped myself from all save Virginia. She had a right to know, and she does know it all."

'Some stale romantic story, I suppose," said

the other, contemptuously; "some tale of wicked indulgence, wrapped in the simulated language of the day, when a violation of the obligations of justice is called imprudence, and guilt softened down into misfortune. Some pretty device to steal away the pity of a tender, inexperienced girl."

"Would to Heaven it were! No, sir; you wrong me, on my soul you do. But let us end this painful interview. Colonel Dangerfield," continued he, with deep solemnity, "do you believe in oaths; in appeals to the Being who is all truth, all justice? If so, hear me assure you, as I hope for happiness hereafter, if not here; as I am a being possessing an immortal soul, which I here pledge to everlasting perdition if I say not the truth; hear me swear to you, that it is misfortune, and not guilt, which urges me to keep from you for a time the reasons for my conduct towards you and yours. They may be weak, unfounded, childish perhaps; they may be a part of my mal—but such as they are, I cannot overcome them just now. Yet before the throne of the great Governor of the universe, I here pledge myself that ere another year has passed away, you shall know all, and that in the mean time the confidence you have bestowed upon me shall not be abused. Dare you trust me thus far?"

"It is asking almost too much, sir; but when I call to mind that but for you I should have had no daughter, I cannot but confess that you are entitled to some little confidence." He reflected a few moments, and resumed,—"I will trust you; though even you yourself little

know at what a risk of one day being pointed at as the most rash and imprudent of fathers. I agree to your terms; in less than a year, you say?"

"In less than a year. Oh! sir," and he took the hand of Colonel Dangerfield, and pressed it; "Oh! sir, you cannot know my gratitude for this confidence; and—and Heaven grant you may never live to repent it!"

They separated, the colonel musing on this last wish, which sounded somewhat equivocal, and Rainsford bending his way to the domicil of Master Zeno Paddock, where sat Mrs. Judith in an ague, a very agony of curiosity. She had a sort of instinctive feeling that something had happened, that something would happen, that something was going on which she did not exactly comprehend, and she forthwith lashed herself, as it were, in nautical phrase, yardarm and yardarm, alongside of Rainsford, determined to sink him outright, if he did not surrender his secret. But alas! all her manœuvres for boarding failed. Rainsford was so deeply immersed in his own anxious and painful feelings, that he answered her like Hotspur, "neglectingly, he knew not what," and unintentionally perplexed her beyond all womanly endurance.

"I thought I saw you coming out of the colonel's just now; didn't I, Mr. Rainsford?"

He looked in her face with a blank vacuity, and replied to his own thoughts,

"One year more—yes—hum—and all will be known."

Mrs. Judith could make nothing of this.

"O yes, as you say, one year more, and then —we shall all be a year older." Mrs. Judith did not know exactly what to say, and, as usual in such like cases, talked nonsense.

"Perhaps not—perhaps after all it may not come to pass."

"Not come to pass that we shall be a year older next year!" screamed Mrs. Paddock, and the scream brought him to his recollection for a moment.

"We may be dead, you know," said he, smiling.

"Ah, that's true; that's clever; hah, hah! I declare you make me laugh, Mr. Rainsford."

"And yet," said Rainsford, relapsing, "it may be—hum—um—um."

"What did you say, sir?"

"All—yes—all my poor brothers went that way—and within a few months of the same age—um—u—u—m."

"Ah! yes sir, this is a scan—I mean a miserable world; we may die, or be robbed, or ose all we have in the world, and our wits into the bargain, before—"

"What do you say about losing my wits, woman?" cried Rainsford, starting up furiously, and glaring at her as if he had seen a ghost.

Mrs. Judith fled out of the room like a timid fawn, and, throwing her handkerchief over it to protect the head of Holofernes from the sun, "made tracks," as Bushfield would say, in a straight line over to the temporary residence of Colonel Dangerfield, where the first person she encountered was Virginia.

"O, Miss Phiginny! Miss Phiginny! such an accident has happened to Mr. Rainsford."

"What accident? tell me, Mrs. Paddock; quick, quick!"

"O, what a miserable world is this! O, Miss Phiginny!"

"For heaven's sake tell me," cried the young lady, "what, what has happened to Mr. Rainsford?" and she trembled and grew as pale as ashes.

"O!—O!—O, I declare I'm so frightened, and so out of breath,—O, who'd have thought it, poor young man!"

"What? what?" cried Virginia, in agony.

"Why, he's run distracted, as sure—"

Here Mrs. Judith was arrested in her speech; Virginia uttered one scream, and fell as if dead on the greensward of the little enclosure in the rear of the house, where she had been sitting under the shade of a spreading tree. Mrs. Dangerfield heard the scream, and ran out to see the cause. She found Virginia lying senseless, and Mrs. Judith wringing her hands, and crying out against this miserable world, almost, nay, quite unconscious of what she was saying. After some time and care, the young maiden recovered sufficiently to utter a few rambling incoherent words.

"So soon—it was not to have come yet. Poor, poor Rainsford, and poor Virginia."

Then seeing Mrs. Paddock, she raised herself up, and asked,

"Are you sure, quite sure?"

"Why I can't altogether say that he has lost all his wits but he talked as if he did not know

what he was saying, and looked at me as if he didn't know me from Adam; and then he called me woman, as if he meant d—l. But as I live, here he comes; who'd have thought it?"

At this moment Rainsford looked over the little paling, and invited Virginia to walk with him to the river-side. Mrs. Dangerfield would have opposed it, but Virginia insisted she was quite recovered, and displayed so much impatience of contradiction, that the kind mother acquiesced.

"My dear Virginia," thought she, "you are not what you used to be."

They walked a long while over the smooth meadows that skirted the river, and under the spreading elms and lofty sycamore-trees that here and there overshadowed the carpets of flowers, now putting forth their many-tinted products of the spring. Rainsford inquired the cause of her temporary indisposition, to which he had heard her mother allude; but she evaded the subject, fearful of giving him pain, and by so doing inflicted perhaps a greater. At length, urged beyond her will to resist, she disclosed the whole of Mrs. Judith's communication. He shrunk with bitter and mortified feelings.

"Yes, every one sees it coming; every one will know it soon, and fly from me as they did from my poor father and brothers; as this foolish woman did from me. Art *thou* not afraid of me, Virginia?"

"Afraid of you!" and she gave him a look so innocent and confiding, that he once more revived to a perception of happiness. They

suffered their anticipations to pass the critical period which it was supposed would decide the colour of their future days.

"If," said he, "as now I sometimes hope it will be,—if all goes well with me, till the dark line of my fate is safely crossed, shall we not be happy, Virginia? I am sure we shall; for art thou not all beauty, and purity, and intelligence; and shall not I be the greatest brute that ever abused the generous reliance of woman, to repay such a confidence as was never yet reposed in man, with any thing but love, reverence, devotion, adoration? Yes, yes! in the words of the poet of tenderness itself,

> 'We'll live together like two wanton vines,
> Circling our souls and loves in one another;
> We'll spring together, and we'll bear one fruit;
> One joy shall make us smile, and one grief mourn;
> One age go with us, and one hour of death
> Shall close our eyes, and one grave make us happy.'"

They sat on the same mossy rock, and the same hallowed silence of nature breathed around, as when he had told his sad history, and disclosed his melancholy love. The time, the occasion, and all the still sublimity of nature, were calculated to call forth the most lofty as well as tender associations.

> "At such a time the soul oft walks abroad,
> For silence is the energy of God!"

The peevish and evanescent excitements of noise and motion, the petty feelings awakened by the glittering pageantry of worldly pomps,

fade into insignificance compared with the holy inspiration of a scene like this. The imagination becomes swelled by those kindred conceptions which the vast concave arch above, the various and magnificent world lying basking all around, awaken; and nothing selfish, or mean, or wicked can enter a well-constituted mind, while contemplating the glorious works of a Being all purity, grandeur, and beneficence.

The mind of Rainsford seemed to take wing to the highest heaven, and to revel in the most glorious perceptions. With the mingled feeling of poetry and philosophy, of love and devotion, he expatiated on the beauty of nature, the chaste delights of virtuous affection, the labours and triumphs of well-aimed genius, and the crowning gift of immortality bestowed upon it here and hereafter. Virginia sat beside him, leaning forward with downward face; her eye raised to his in mingled admiration of his lofty flights, and fear lest he should overleap the slippery pinnacle of reason, and topple down headlong on the other side. She trembled at the dizzy height to which he sometimes soared, and her fearful anticipations pictured him as just shivering on the verge of the almost imperceptible line, the very hairbreadth space which, in the sensitive empire of the brain, separates the fruitful region where the elements act in sweet accord and all is universal harmony, from that of chaos, where nothing but shapeless monsters and jarring atoms abide.

A feeling of exquisitely mournful tenderness came over her soul, and the tears flowed down

her cheeks as she gazed on his face, which was become pale with the labours of the mind. He observed her, and suddenly stopping his career among the regions of the upper world, softly asked,—

"What ails thee, Virginia? Do not be frightened; I am not gone yet, whatever I may be, or whatever Mrs. Judith may say. For the first time since I began to live only in the bitterness of anticipated wretchedness, for the first time I have this evening suffered myself to hope for better things, and the new guest has made me almost giddy with delight. Yes, we shall yet be blessed together."

At that moment the same shrill, cold quaver they had heard on a former occasion thrilled across the purple waters.

"Let us go home," said Virginia; and they returned without exchanging another word.

CHAPTER V.

Showing how a pocket-handkerchief may be fatal to other persons besides poor Desdemona.

Mrs. Judith Paddock, the mirror of village gossips, went home with a bee in her bonnet, which buzzed at such a tremendous rate that she was nearly deprived of her wits. That there was some "mystery and grand" she was convinced; something between her lodger and Miss Dangerfield, which she could not fathom with the full-length line of her curiosity; and this being one of the few secrets that had ever eluded her sagacity, she was only the more fervently stimulated to get at it by some means or other. She went cackling about the village like unto a venerable old hen which has lost its last chicken, uttering mysterious innuendoes, and throwing out random hints, which set the ears of her sister spirits buzzing almost equal to her own. The spinning-wheels stood stock still; the pots and kettles boiled over; the panting labourer, when he came home to dinner, found it overdone, or not done at all; and the pussy-cats skimmed the cream of the milkpans with perfect impunity. Such are the dire consequences of a secret in a country village!

Two other important events took place during this remarkable spring, this *annus mirabilis:*—Colonel Dangerfield commencing rebuild-

ing his house on a great scale; and Master Zeno Paddock, having appointed a regent to preside over his classical academy, departed for the purpose of preparing the wherewithal to commence his Daily. No marvel every thing but talking and wondering was at a stand in Dangerfieldville.

In the mean time, the watchful tenderness of the mother became every day more and more excited by the situation of her daughter, and the conduct of Rainsford, whose mind gradually resumed its vicissitudes of deep depression and causeless exaltation. A mere trifle will change the tone of such a mind as his, and bring it back again to its wonted course, with a reaction which gives new vigour to former impressions. The tolling of a bell, the whooping of an owl, the song of the whippoorwill, heard of an evening or at midnight in the solitude and silence of the country, will, to some minds, and in particular circumstances, bring a train of melancholy forebodings that strike hard upon the chord which is most apt to vibrate to presentiments and ideal terrors.

The whole course of Rainsford's life had predisposed him to melancholy and superstition; for years he had brooded over one single idea, on which every thing he heard, or saw, or felt bore with a force more or less painful or prophetic; and the same shrill, menacing warning, which time and the belief of a large portion of mankind have consecrated to evil omen, occurring twice, under almost the same circumstances, and on the same spot, at once demolished the temporary fabric which a new-born hope had

reared to his future happiness. In fact, the relaxed state of his mind could not support the tension it had undergone, and the momentary perception of bliss, like a stimulating medicine administered to worn-out nature, only contributed to increase his ultimate depression. Impelled by that fatality which so generally attends on minds of his cast, instead of using every effort to withdraw from the contemplation of the painful idea which almost ever occupied his thoughts, he commissioned Zeno Paddock to procure him certain mischievous books treating of the causes, symptoms, and remedies of the malady which had so long haunted his imagination. When that worthy returned, as he did after an absence of a month, Rainsford might be seen poring with intense and harassing interest over their pages, where, as might be expected, he found enough to strengthen his habitual convictions; for it is only in extremes that the madman differs from the sage.

Poor Virginia now felt the truth of the universal maxim, that every thing, even the most indifferent in itself, brings to the apprehensive affections more or less cause to believe what we fear as well as what we hope. Every little eccentricity, every burst of feeling, every flight of fancy, which, but for her predisposition to apprehend the worst would have amused or delighted her, now carried with it a cold chill of apprehension, and kept her for ever on the rack of fear. This painful state, while it worried her to the very soul, gradually increased her interest in this intelligent, amiable being,

and she watched him with more than a mother's anxiety as the period approached which he looked forward to as the crisis of his fate.

The election of members of the State assembly was now approaching, and Leonard Dangerfield, having received the last fine edge of the law at the capital, was expected home ere long to canvass for the honours of a seat. It therefore behooved Master Zeno to bestir himself, and get his Daily in order to support the claims of the young gentleman against the opposite candidate, who had already taken the field. The greatest, certainly, and in all probability the happiest, man in all Kentucky was Zeno on the morning in which the first number of the "Western Sun" shone in the village of Dangerfieldville. His importance, not only in his own eyes, but the eyes of his fellow-citizens, was increased at least five hundredfold; that being about the number of readers to whom his opinions from that time forward were destined to be little less than gospel. He began by modestly regulating the affairs of the general government; professed his determination to judge for himself, and decide according to the dictates of conscience; let fly a tremendous shot at the editor of the Eastern Star for differing with him in opinion; and concluded by criticising an almanac, which, being the only book ever published previous to that time in the village of Dangerfieldville, was entitled to special notice. We should not like to have been in the shoes of the unlucky philomath who compiled it; for it was a new court-party almanac, and Zeno be-

longed to the opposite side. He accordingly cut it up terribly, and for ever destroyed its reputation among the people, by proving that it had already rained six times when the author had pronounced the weather would be clear. Having demolished this caitiff, he strutted about famously, and began seriously to contemplate upsetting the "new court party."

In a little time a dreadful war raged between the Western Sun and the Eastern Star, insomuch that, had they only been nearer to each other, there is little doubt but that they would have been a great deal more civil. The village of Dangerfieldville had heretofore been a quiet, peaceable village, disturbed only by the incessant cackle of Mrs. Judith; but now, since the sceptre of public opinion was seized by the great Zeno, his wife waned into comparative insignificance. The torch of discord was waved by a greater than she, and in the course of a few weeks two duels and six rencounters took place in various parts of the neighbouring country, all of which might be traced to the agency of the "Western Sun." It was generally thought that Zeno and he of the Eastern Star would certainly have measured pistols, if they had not been providentially separated by a great forest. It was whispered, however, that the former had scruples, in so far that though he didn't mind giving offence, it ran against his conscience to make atonement or give satisfaction. In truth, he was a right moral man, whatever the Eastern Star might aver to the contrary.

He was getting to be cock of the wood when Leonard Dangerfield returned home, a most

proper man as was ever *raised* in the regions of the west, so fruitful in fine specimens of the human species. He was about six feet high, and as straight as an arrow; his limbs were of the finest proportions, such as are not common elsewhere among men so much beyond the usual size; and he had the same perfect command of them as a young spirited blood-horse has of his. His features, like his carriage, were bold, manly, and indicative of a perfect self-confidence; and his eyes, though of blue, had rather too much of that daring expression which is one of the characteristics of perfect freedom. As a physical being, a mere animal man, he did honour to the rich soil and pure air in which, though not produced, he had grown up and flourished; for there was an admirable expression of strength and activity in his form and limbs, without the least approach to what is aptly and expressively called clumsy. Nor did his mind lack fellowship with his body, for he possessed courage, energy, decision, enterprise, and sagacity. Add to this, like almost all the gentlemen we have ever seen from this portion of the United States, he possessed a natural eloquence, a flow of words and ideas which perhaps originate in the fact that every young man in the west looks forward to political life and political distinctions, which can very rarely be obtained without a command of that great weapon which in a free country wins its way more certainly than the sword.

The people of the United States have been occasionally ridiculed for the warmth and eagerness with which they participate in elections

and other political contests of less importance. Yet this perpetual solicitude about public affairs is one of the great characteristics of liberty; and provided it does not extend to actual violence, nor to the disruption of kindred and social ties, is a wholesome and indeed essential ingredient in the composition of a free people. Without this deep interest, which instigates them to a perpetual watchfulness of their rulers, and rivets their attention so closely to the acts of their government, there would be no security against those quiet, insidious usurpations which power is perpetually making on the rights of mankind.

For ourselves, we are pleased that our countrymen are agitated occasionally by the wave of politics, and hope never to see the day when they shall become indifferent to the acts or the character of their rulers, or neglect the exercise of their great right of expressing their opinions freely and fearlessly. And though we do not admire female politicians, we as little like to see a woman without patriotism as without religion. It has often been a subject of regret to observe that natural love of aristocracy, title, precedence, and that disgraceful foible of giving a preference to foreign fashions, manners, and countries, which are among the characteristics of the more vulgar and ignorant of those females who aspire to distinction in the *beau monde*. The love of country in the mind of a virtuous, reflecting, intellectual woman should come next to her faith, her domestic affections, and her attachment to home. It ought never to mingle in party dissensions, or become the common

topic of her thoughts or conversation; but, like the pure light of religion, it should be a quiet, deep-rooted, unobtrusive principle, worthy of every sacrifice except that of the virtues which constitute the divinity of the sex.

The great day at length arrived big with the fate of Leonard Dangerfield and Miles Starkweather, each a candidate for the wayward affections of that wayward sovereign the king people. The sturdy freeholders of the west, as they are pleased to say, with some little degree of reason on their side, have no idea of buying a rackoon in his hole. They like to see the candidates face to face, to shake hands, talk, crack jokes, and maybe crack a bottle with them, before they assist in making them their temporary masters, or, for the word master grates on the ear of a freeman, their representatives. Above all, they must hear each one make a speech, if it be only from a stump, before they say ay or no to his pretensions. On this occasion, therefore, the opposing candidates attended the poll, and gave in their creed of politics. Leonard advocated the "old court" in a speech of two good hours, and the sovereigns hurraed, and pronounced him "transcendent."

"I'll be goy blamed," cried one Rowland Harrod, a broth of a fellow at the polls, "if he don't speak as if he hadn't another minute to live."

The opposition man was born out of the State, and suspected of having a cross of the Yankee; which was a great disadvantage, for Kentucky inherits from Old Virginia a decided preference for orators and statesmen of her own "raising." But the worst of all was his propen-

sify to dressing too well, and always carrying a white pocket-handkerchief. Yet he had all the "new court" party in his favour, and was huzzaed most vociferously. There was no knowing which of the courts would carry the day, when a queer, wizened, weather-beaten old gentleman, called Colonel Trollope, with one eye, and a face of mortal obliquity, ascended the forum, videlicet, the steps of the court-house, and addressed the audience as follows:—

"Friends and fellow-citizens,—That man who has been just speaking to you, it appears to me, places great confidence in succeeding in his election, because he has a white pocket-h-a-a-ndkerchief. He means to touch in the exquisite spot, and has been flourishing this piece of white before your eyes to dazzle you. Didn't you see how he flourished it when he had nothing to say? when he was fairly up a tree, just like the preacher the Sunday before last? He got against a snag several times, and then he would roar out, 'O, Mesopotamia! Mesopotamia!' and one old woman cried herself into a conversion.

"But, gentlemen, I don't mean you; we are not old women; we are not to be coaxed with pretty words sweetened with maple sugar, and no meaning in them, nor dazzled out of our understandings with a white towel, for what I know. (*hurrah! wheugh! whoop!*) I say his gentility won't serve his turn here, nor his gar-broth. I'm for Dangerfield, though he hasn't got a white pocket-h-a-a-ndkerchief, and though he can't play on the piane. He's a man of good strong horse sense, and his sister can

make a pair of moccasins out of his old boots, I know, anyhow. Dangerfield knows what we want, and will do it. But this gen*teel*man of the white flag [*hurrah!*] would be sipping champaign, and studying fashions. We want no such members that sail under the white flag; no such exotics among us, that think they can't study their A B C at home. We men of the west are splendid executors of our own will, and don't want the aid of the white h-a-a-nd-kerchief. Damme if I don't believe he had a ring on his little finger!"

"O thunder! a ring! Dangerfield for ever. Hurrah! Dangerfield for me!" cried old court and new court; and the fortunes of Miles Starkweather, like those of the Bourbons, sunk under the white flag. In a few days there appeared in the Western Sun a paragraph headed "Glorious Victory! Waterloo Defeat!" as if some foreign enemy had been driven from our shores; and Master Zeno Paddock was observed to deport himself after the manner of a dunghill cock, that hath just frightened a greater coward than himself.

CHAPTER VI.

Proving that the fear of evil is the worst of evils.

During the progress of the events recorded in our last chapter, little apparent change had taken place in the outward deportment of Rainsford; but if it had been possible to penetrate the recesses of his mind, it would have been discovered, that as the period to which he looked forward as the crisis of his fate approached more nearly, his terrors increased. To those who watched him narrowly, as did the mother of Virginia more especially, there occasionally appeared inconsistencies in his conduct, distorted opinions, and an equivocal expression of the eye, that, all combined, produced a suspicion in her mind that all was not right with him. And indeed it was so. He enjoyed not the present, he shrunk from the future. The delight of being beloved, the beauties of nature, the prospect of happiness that seemed to await him, all turned to waters of bitterness when connected with the dark and dismal prospect which closed the train of anticipations.

"How beautiful," exclaimed Virginia, one evening as they were contemplating the glowing splendours of the setting sun, reflected in the clouds, in a thousand glorious tints, which baffle the power of language, and bid defiance

to the colours of the most cunning artist. "How beautiful! I never look on such a scene as this without feeling a capacity to enjoy the blessings of Providence with a sweeter relish. I seem to identify myself with all nature, which looks so smiling and happy that I cannot help sympathizing with her."

"How different it is with me," replied Rainsford, in a melancholy tone. "To me the sunshine, the shade, the flowing river, the smiling earth, the starry heavens, and all the glorious panoply of nature, are but as dear objects, dear friends with whom I must soon part for ever. As I look on them, I am reminded by the fiend that is always at my elbow, whispering in my ear, that the time is now at hand when, in all human probability, this combination of order and beauty, this masterpiece of the Divine Architect, teeming with subjects for reason and fancy to dilate upon, and exhibiting to the senses all that is lovely to the eye, sweet to the smell, harmonious to the ear, will be to me but as a howling wilderness, a chaos like my mind, in which atoms will war with atoms; and where the throne of the presiding Divinity will be buried in its own ruins. The wretched being who stands under the gallows, on the brink of atoning for his crimes, might as well expect to enjoy the last light of the sun, or the first breath of spring, as I."

"O Rainsford! I thought—I hoped you were looking forward to happiness!" said Virginia, deeply affected with his melancholy. "For my sake, for your own sake, I beseech you to

struggle with such dreadful anticipations. It is not certain, nay, I feel a presentiment it will not be. Exert yourself, dear Rainsford."

"I do—I have. Never man sustained such a struggle as I have done, as I do now, and every moment of my life. Sometimes I succeed in whipping the hovering demons from my brow, but they come again, and find me only the weaker for my useless victory. Sometimes, as in a dream, I am taken up and carried away to the regions of hope, but, like the prisoner enjoying a few minutes respite from his dungeon, it is only to be brought back into darkness, the more dismal from the contrast of light he has enjoyed. Sometimes I lose for a moment the clew of my eternal thoughts, but it is only to find it again, and be dragged along with greater violence than ever." He paused awhile; Virginia could not answer for her emotions.

"Virginia," continued he, with a sad solemnity, "I must leave this place at once, and for ever; or at least until the hour is past. You, that have known and cherished me as a rational being, worthy to be one day the guardian of your happiness, must not see me when I shall, in all human probability, become an object of fear, horror, disgust. No, no, you shall not see me gnash my teeth; foam at the mouth; twist myself into a thousand contortions; roar—rave—blaspheme, tear my flesh; bite the dust; and, perhaps, in some cunning paroxysm, escape the watchful eye of affection, only to commit violence on those I best love."

"O don't talk so, don't talk so! or I shall go mad myself," cried Virginia.

"Ay, madness is catching; it runs in the blood they say. But surely a wife cannot take it from her husband. If she can it will be a rare conjunction, you and I. Whoever is born under it will be a philosopher."

"What—what are you talking of, Dudley?"

"Ay, true—I am only taking a step before old time; but there's no occasion, it will come soon enough—no danger of that—for they say, they *do* say—"

His wanderings were arrested by an exclamation of anguish from Virginia, who sunk down on the ground, overpowered by the terrible conviction that his malady had in truth come upon him. He placed his hand on his brow, rubbed his eyes, then knelt down beside her, and by degrees came to himself again.

"I was only jesting, Virginia. I am not mad yet, indeed I am not. I was only rehearsing the tragedy," added he, bitterly.

"Then let me beseech you, never to jest with me thus again. I am not lead, nor marble, nor a fool, to be thus played with. O, Rainsford, spare me such jests in future. I cannot bear them."

He led her to a seat, and proceeded,

"We must part, Virginia; I feel if I wish to spare you the last drop in the cup of bitterness, we must part at once. If my calamity overtakes me here—"

"And what if it overtakes you elsewhere?" asked Virginia, suddenly interrupting him.

"No matter; it will be among strangers, or perhaps in some wild solitude of the woods

where I can perish without exciting disgust and horror. They may find me some day or other, but they cannot tell my bones."

"Why, why will you talk thus? But listen to me, Rainsford; I do not, I cannot believe in the truth of your presentiment. I am satisfied if you can only keep your mind from the anticipation, the reality will never come."

"Ay, there's the difficulty; perhaps that very anticipation is a part of my malady?"

"Well, whether it be or not, if the worst should come, the worse it is the more you will require some one to watch over you; to abide by you in your hours of depression; and to assist in all that may administer to your comfort. I owe you this good turn and will pay it."

"You, you, Virginia, with those delicate fingers, those slender limbs, that soft and gentle heart! No, no, I must have chains, and giants to put them on. Go, go, tell your parents all, and let them drive me away, for I am bitten, as sure as there is a Providence above us whose decrees are irreversible. I heard a voice last night telling me to make my peace with Heaven, while yet I was responsible for my acts: and I will do it. I'll go to church to-morrow, and pray that I may die without the guilt of blood upon my head or hands; and then, the day after, bid you all farewell, and launch my boat among the stormy billows of the world, haply without rudder or compass to direct her course. Perhaps some time hence you may hear of a starving, ragged wanderer, roaming among the distant regions, chattering disjointed nonsense to a troop of ragged boys, and having

no owner to claim him. Wilt thou shed a tear then, Virginia?"

Virginia could not answer. She was silent, motionless, in the numb palsy of despair. The conviction of his ultimate fate had come upon her, and hope took its flight for ever. She grasped his arm with trembling hesitation, and begged they might return home. That evening the conduct of Rainsford was so strange, and he spoke so confidently of going away soon, that both the colonel and Mrs. Dangerfield were surprised, anxious, and almost offended. The depression, the paleness, and the traces of tears on the face of Virginia also caught their attention; and when the young man retired, and Mrs. Dangerfield sought her room, the unhappy girl followed, and throwing herself into her arms, sobbed as if her heart would break. She told her mother all, and the mother discreetly, tenderly, yet firmly, advised her to let Rainsford go; nay, to encourage his going; the sooner the better.

"Were it poverty, sickness, imprudence, any thing but guilt," said she, "I would not urge you to break your engagement. But this, this is too terrible; no pledge, no obligation ought to be considered binding in a case like this; since nothing can be more certain, my dear, than that, without administering in the least to his happiness, you must inevitably sacrifice your own."

"But, dear mother, perhaps my presence, my affectionate attentions, my watchful cares, my never-ceasing kindness, might do something towards his happiness. It may be only a con-

stitutional melancholy, what I have heard called hypochondria; and physicians say, that the best way of curing this is to call up agreeable impressions and anticipations. Let me try; do, dearest mother!"

The mother sighed, and shook her head.

"Ah! Virginia, yours are but the dreams of youth—and female youth. To you, and such as you, love is the soul of existence, the object and the end of life. It can do all with you, and you think it can do the like with all. But there are miracles it cannot perform, and this is one. Know you not that when the mind is fairly unhinged, and swings with creaking harshness from its usual bearings, nine times in ten the objects of our dearest love become those of our deepest hate. Insanity distorts every thing, and this among the rest. It must be so: you must be separated."

"But whither can he go?" exclaimed Virginia, in anguish. "He has no kindred, no friends; nay, scarcely an acquaintance but ourselves; for his peculiar situation has kept him, he says, aloof from all association with his fellow-creatures. What will become of him should his malady overtake him among strangers?"

"Be not afraid, my dearest daughter. Go where he may, he will find good hearts to pity, and afford him all the cares and comforts of which he may be susceptible."

"Yes, a chain, a cell, and a grave," sighed Virginia; "a strait waistcoat, a cudgel, and a brute to lay it on."

"Necessity, my love, has no law of kindness or forbearance."

"Yet, I cannot but think that kindness and forbearance might often take the place of brutal force. Let me try, O let me try, dear mother! a little while, only a little while—until we see the end."

"The risk is too great; the penalty that may be paid for it too dear. Neither I nor thy father can consent to it. But enough for to-night, to-morrow all must be settled. Good night, my love; and may angels watch over thy innocence."

"Good night, dear mother." She kissed her mother, and reposed her head a moment on her bosom. "Good night, dear mother," repeated she once more, and slowly left the room. She sat a long while at the window, pondering over her unhappy situation, and shuddering at the prospect before poor Rainsford. Nature seemed to lower in sympathy with her sad forebodings, for the night was one of pitchy darkness and death-like repose, save when the flashes of ziz-zag lightning passed like fiery serpents, with forked tongues, athwart the lowering clouds rearing their heavy volumes above the cliffs on the other side of the river, followed by the distant thunder, which ever and anon grew louder, and more near. By the light of one of the flashes she thought she saw a figure, stalking near the window which looked out upon the little greensward. She was somewhat alarmed; when a well-known voice addressed her in an under tone.

"Virginia, know you what day of the week and month this is?"

"Saturday, the tenth of May," she replied.

"Ay, I thought I was right in my reckoning; it is the glorious anniversary,—it is the day on which my last brother, the last of all but me, died, as I shall die."

"O, don't break my heart! go home, I beseech you, Rainsford. The storm is coming across the river, and you will be drenched with rain. Quick, quick, there's not a moment to be lost."

"Well, let it come; the rain will cool my brains, and if the wind should be strong, it may blow down some high tree, and dash them out. Farewell, farewell."

She saw him dart away into the forest, and the gentle, blessed guest, the cherub sleep, visited not her pillow that long melancholy night, during a great part of which the heavens seemed on fire, and the earth shivering beneath the crash of the angry thunders.

CHAPTER VII.

"*O, he's a screamer!*"
MISSISSIPPI BOATMAN.

THE following day being the Sabbath, the village of Dangerfieldville was in a state of great excitement on account of the arrival of a famous preacher; an event of no small consequence where so few novelties occurred to rouse the rural populace from the even tenor of their daily occupations. As happens in many parts of our country, there was a neat little church in the village, but no regular clergyman, and they were indebted to the occasional visits of itinerants for their opportunities of public devotion. These happened so seldom, that the arrival of a preacher was quite an event. All, therefore, flocked to the little church; some to while away the idle Sabbath morn, some to laugh, and some to say their prayers.

The church was filled when the preacher ascended the pulpit, and there might be observed a little flurry among the congregation, a low whisper, as they settled themselves in reverent attention to hear what he had to say. He was a tall, raw-boned, fleshless man, with an appearance of great physical energy; high cheek-bones, hollow cheeks, deep sparkling eyes, a pale aspect, a long face, and a profusion of stiff black hair standing almost upright

above his high forehead. There was something not only energetic, but intellectual about him; that species of strong unpolished intellect which sometimes performs such wonders in this world. There was a wild earnestness in his tone and gesture, as he proceeded in his discourse, which evidenced his sincerity and fervour; an absence of all attempts at rhetorical embellishment, which sometimes, nay often, approached to vulgarity, and while it created a shuddering thrill of horror in apprehensive minds, in others awakened a feeling of the burlesque. But with all this, there were genius, energy, pathos, and enthusiasm, we may say fanaticism, combined; and though undisciplined and unpolished, still their strength and force were perhaps only the more irresistible. He was the preacher of terror, not of religion; he relied more on the fears than the reason or the hopes of mankind; forgetting that the great Being who has made mercy the first of our duties, cannot have adopted vengeance as the first of his attributes; and that, in the language of a reverend bard,

"Thou, fair Religion, wast designed,
Duteous daughter of the skies,
To warm and cheer the human mind,
To make men happy, good, and wise.
First drawn by thee, thus glow'd the gracious scene,
Till Superstition, fiend of wo,
Bade doubts to rise, and tears to flow,
And spread dark clouds our view and Heaven between.
Drawn by her pencil the Creator stands,
His beams of mercy thrown aside;
With thunder arming his uplifted hands,
And hurling vengeance wide.
Hope at the sight aghast yet lingering flies,
And dash'd on terror's rocks faith's best dependence lies."

The moisture burst from his forehead, and rolled down his hollow cheeks; he writhed in the toils of his own sublimated energies, as he proceeded. He first drew a picture of the vengeance of Heaven even in this world, where it was supposed offenders escaped its justice; he painted, in colours of exaggerated truth, the torments of a guilty conscience struggling with present pain, and the fear of future punishments, and how the decay of the body only added tenfold to the terrors of the dying sinner. He dwelt with a sort of savage exultation on the various dispensations of this world of guilt and misery; told how the wrath of the Almighty visited the sins of the father upon the children in a thousand hereditary diseases and defects, the consequences of *his* crimes and unbelief. To some he sent the gout, to others he sent lameness, to others blindness, to others apoplexy, and to others he sent idiocy and madness; thus punishing generation after generation, by taking away from them the faculties they had perverted to the purposes of impiety and unbelief.

"Thus," exclaimed he, in a voice of thunder, "thus are the wicked deprived of their boasted impunity even in this world. But the world to come, the after world! the punishment the guilty soul endures throughout all eternity. Look! you don't see it, but I see it! I see you at this moment standing like children laughing on the edge of a high rock, on the very brink of eternal flames. The awful gulf lies yawning right before you, and yet you take no care to avoid it. I see you," and he leaned over the

pulpit and looked down as if in horror, "I see you tumbling down, down, down, one after the other; there you go, there! there goes a young man who thought because he was young he would never die; there! there goes a vain girl, who, because she had red cheeks, and sparkling eyes, and a snow-white bosom, dreamed that death would spare her, and the great Judge pardon her offences on the score of her beauty. And there! there tumbles a trembling old sinner, who, because he had lived to fourscore years, thought he would live for ever. And there! see how the smoke rises! but I cannot look any more," and he sank back into the pulpit and was silent a few moments, while the simple congregation sat stupified with terror. Suddenly he clapped his hands to his ears.

"But ah! my brethren, what is that I hear? It is in vain I try to shut it out from my eyes—it comes in at my ears. From the dark den of your suffering I hear the screams, the shrieks, the curses of tormented sinners. One cries, O it would be a happy thing for me if this tooth-ache of mine would last only a thousand years or two. Another prays that he may be let off for a hundred thousand years of gout—that is the glutton, the winebibber. Another beseeches the eternal ministers of vengeance, who stand with their ladles, throwing oil, and pitch, and pine-knots on the fire to keep it up, that he may have a drop of muddy salt water to cool his tongue. That is a man who thought because he was honest, and just, and loved his wife and children, and fulfilled all his worldly duties, he

would be happy hereafter. Miserable fool! I tell thee, my brethren, these are the devil's links, that chain the immortal soul flat down upon the earth, and keep it there. But what a howl was that! Did you not hear it? Ah! now I look down, I see who it is; that is a vain, conceited philosopher, who said, in the pride of his heart, there is no God, no hereafter, no heaven, and no hell. Ah hah! he knows better now. Hark! he is lamenting in the midst of his torments, that he had not been created a toad, a serpent, any crawling, filthy reptile of the mud and mire, rather than an immortal being, to suffer everlasting torments.

"My brethren, O! that you could be like a quill in the fire, to be shrivelled and burnt up in a moment. But no, you will writhe in torments, and still live, and every hour will add to your capacity to feel more keenly. You think, I suppose, you'll get used to it at last. But, believe me, you will not; you will feel ten thousand times the agony that the poor people did the other day, who were scalded to death in the steamboat. And then, oh! then, you will hear your dear friends howling beside you—your fathers, mothers, sisters, brothers, and your dear little children will be crying out to you for help; and you'll see them crawling about on billows of fire. And then, too, you will be thinking of the good things you have enjoyed in this world; the dainties, the vanities, the lusts of the flesh, and all those wicked delights you held so dear. You think I'll comfort you! I will be a witness against you. And if any one of you dare to appear before

the judgment seat of Heaven, I will turn you back, and send you howling to the bottomless pit of fire."

There was a strange, an almost supernatural force in the unstudied oratory of this singular man, which nearly overpowered the well-ballanced minds of the most staid and rational hearers. The day was sweltering hot, the little church crowded almost to suffocation; and these circumstances, combined with the stirring terrors of the ghost-like preacher, overpowered the nerves of many of the congregation, who gasped for breath, and cried out until nature, no longer able to support the mental, as well as physical exertion, subsided into a sort of quiet insensibility.

Rainsford had made his appearance at church. The absence of food, which Mrs. Judith declared he had not tasted for four-and-twenty hours, the harassed state of his mind for some time past, and his exposure to the storm the night before, had given him the appearance of one whose mental and physical energies had been most sorely tried. Virginia sat and watched him with intense anxiety. The declamations of the preacher seemed to shake his very soul; he could not become paler than he was; but she marked the convulsive twitches of his features, the terrible wildness of his eye, and the shudder of his frame, when the clergyman came to that part of his discourse, in which he spoke of hereditary insanity as the punishment of the crimes of the parent. Nor did she fail to mark the strange unintelligible look he fixed upon her, at the passage denounc-

ing the ties of affection, and the social feelings and duties, as the chains with which Satan fastened the soul of man to the earth, and prevented his realizing his immortal hopes.

He joined her after service, and they walked together. As is usual, they talked of the preacher, and the sermon, of both which Virginia expressed her disapprobation; but Rainsford appeared deeply affected by them. He seemed to be under the influence of the most sublimated enthusiasm; and had not Virginia now accustomed herself to shrink from every lofty flight, or daring plunge of his imagination, she would have been charmed with the glowing richness of his mind.

"It is a beautiful theory, Virginia," said he, "that of entire abstraction from this world, and all its occupations, feelings, sufferings, and delights. It makes us independent of joy and sorrow; and places us on a level with the beings of the upper worlds. To me it would be the lot, of all others, most desirable; for to him who is hopeless of happiness here, it were some comfort to be insensible to misery."

"But is such a state possible?"

"Most assuredly, Virginia; there have been men, ay, and women too, so self-sustained, or so supported by the divinity of faith, as to be insensible to all mental or corporeal suffering, save that which arose from the uncertainties of hereafter. Nay, they have cast away all the ties of kindred, severed the links of nature, sacrificed love, glory, riches, parental and fraternal affection, and became as spirits walking the earth, but holding no communion with it

or its inhabitants. I almost wish I were such a one. And I could be," cried he, his eyes almost glaring with awakened hopes, "I could be, were it not for one link that binds me to the earth; were that but severed, I might be little less than the angels."

"Would to heaven it were possible!" thought poor Virginia.

"What is your opinion, Virginia?"

"These things are above my thoughts; yet I cannot see how it is possible to live in this world, and abstract ourselves so entirely from it as neither to know nor care for any thing or anybody but ourselves. And if it were possible, it seems to me that this, after all, would be but the most refined selfishness. There are ties in this world that ought not to be severed but by death; duties which we cannot shrink from without blame; and enjoyments which it would be ungrateful in us not to taste in moderation."

"Ties! duties! enjoyments! Pish! Virginia, did you not hear what the preacher said? These are the devil's links. Yes, yes, he was right. With such a load of mortal trumpery on our backs, one might as soon attempt to scale an ice mountain perpendicular to the skies as gain the blessings of hereafter. For my part, I mean one of these days to go and live alone in a hollow tree in the woods, and not allow a squirrel or a woodpecker to share it with me. Ha, ha! what think you of the idea, Virginia?"

"As one unworthy the subject we are speaking on," replied she, in a tone of deep depression.

"The sublime and the ridiculous are as nearly

allied as life and death, time and eternity. An imaginary line separates them, and thus they become opposite principles, like the people of two nations divided by nothing, yet who scarcely seem to think they belong to the same identical class of quarrelsome curs. Ha, ha! Virginia, were you to die suddenly—I mean in an instant—by a flash of lightning, before you could cry 'God bless me!' do you think you would go to heaven?"

"I hope so, through Heaven's mercy."

"I'll warrant you—I'd swear to it! and thus there would be two souls saved at once. Thou art all innocence, dear Virginia; thy life has been, until I came to mar it, a blessing to thyself, a blessing to all around thee, *ay, all but me!*" and here he lowered his tone, so that she could not distinguish what he said. "To die now were to be happy; for who knows but when you come to be a wife, and all the worldly ties of marriage surround and trammel thee, thou mayst lose thy hold on heaven, and tumble to the earth? It were a great pity! Better to die now!"

"I don't comprehend you," replied Virginia, who had been listening with a vague yet fearful foreboding.

"So much the better, so much the better! Ha! yonder I see the inspired man; I must go and talk with him. I've a case of conscience to submit. It requires a man that can split a hair to decide it. When it is settled you shall know all, for the bliss of heaven must consist in the fruition of knowledge. Good-by, Virginia; thou art an angel, if not a martyr!"

He hurried off to meet the preacher, leaving Virginia saddened, perplexed, and terrified with his strange ramblings, which either meant nothing or boded mischief.

CHAPTER VIII.

Fanaticism.

RAINSFORD invited the preacher to a conference, in which the latter unwittingly, and without suspecting his object, said all he could to confirm him in the dark design which had been conjured up by his discourse of the morning. With the rash and fervent eloquence of an imagination almost as heated as that of Rainsford himself, he declaimed against the moral duties of this world, and arraigned the gentle ties of kindred, friendship, and love at the bar of eternal Omnipotence as impious lusts of the flesh, hateful to the purity of the immortal soul. He stigmatized the love of a beautiful and virtuous woman as one of the secret temptations of the enemy of man, to lure him from the pursuit of his everlasting happiness; and denounced the best affections of the heart as the product of its rank, incurable corruption. In short, they parted, leaving the young man a gloomy, thoughtful visionary, on the high road to the fury of fanaticism, and alternately the sport of reason staggering on its throne, of imagination exalted into madness.

By degrees he came to be fully impressed with the conviction that the misfortunes of his family were the ministers of Divine vengeance

for some great offence of his grandfather, and that the only way in which he could make atonement, so as to escape their fate and ensure his future happiness, was to offer a sacrifice of all his worldly affections on the altar of faith. After a struggle which increased and accelerated the natural tendency of his mind towards a total derangement, he at length convinced himself that Virginia was the great and fatal obstacle in the way of his salvation; and that by making a noble disinterested sacrifice of her, he would ensure his peace here and hereafter. A deep, stern gloom succeeded this conviction. He would sit for hours in one position and one spot, gazing with vacant look at some object of which it was apparent he had no distinct perception; he neglected all the common offices of life, his dress, his beard, his meals, and his sleep; and passed the whole day without uttering a single word in answer to the ten thousand questions of Mrs. Judith Paddock.

At the end of the third day his eye suddenly brightened, he started from his seat with a strange alacrity, and, concealing a dirk in his bosom, which he had brought with him from an idea that his journey might expose him to occasions when it would be necessary, he sank on his knees, appeared deeply engaged in devotion, and then walked briskly forth towards the dwelling of Colonel Dangerfield. Virginia welcomed him with a melancholy tenderness, and shuddered at the alteration he had undergone since last they parted. He invited her to enjoy an evening walk, and led her on by degrees to a spot on the river-side which could not be seen

from the house. He desired her to be seated, and, sitting down by her side, fixed his eyes intently on her face for some moments, with a strange expression that, she knew not why, alarmed her, not for herself, but him.

"Virginia," at length he said, "dost thou remember any sins thou hast committed, and not atoned for?"

"It would be presumptuous in me to say so; but this I believe I can say, that I have never sinned without being sorry for what I had done."

"I warrant you. I would stake a life ten thousand times more worth than this ragged remnant I possess, that thou art as innocent of all intentional offence to thy fellow-creatures or their Creator, as was the lamb which the old patriarch offered up instead of his only son. Dost thou believe in the efficacy of such sacrifices, Virginia?"

"I believe that there is a better sacrifice than this,—that of ourselves, our selfish wishes, and selfish passions."

"You say true, you say true," cried he, eagerly; "the welfare of the immortal soul, the interminable duration of eternity, must not be sacrificed at the shrine of the few short years, the few miserable enjoyments we can crowd into them. But to obtain the great blessing for which all men were created, some victim is necessary, and that victim must be spotless innocence itself. The wretched sinner can offer no atonement for others, for his own transgressions require all his blood to wash them out. The harmless lamb or the unsinning virgin can

alone atone for the wickedness of the race of man; and hence, in the early stages of almost all religions, calamities were averted or blessings obtained by the greatest of all testimonies —greater than the voluntary martyrdom of the saints—the sacrifice of an Iphigenia, the dearest, the bitterest proof of full faith in the religion they professed."

"But our mild, beneficent religion requires not these; it requires not to be consecrated by the shedding of blood."

"Not consecrated by the shedding of blood! What think you of the thousands of martyrs in almost every age and nation? of the innocent women and babes, the millions of human sacrifices which bigotry, ambition, avarice, and revenge, skulking under the mantle of faith and holiness, have offered up to the sword or the fire? Virginia! I tell you, Virginia, that all the enjoyments of this world, all the bliss of hereafter, is the price of blood!"

The young maiden shuddered at hearing these gloomy and terrible words, and beholding the wild expression of his eyes as he uttered them. She wished herself at home, and was rising to go, when he hastily exclaimed,—

"Not yet, not quite yet; a few minutes more, and you shall commence your flight. Come, kneel down and pray for me, as I will for you. Heaven knows I want the prayers of all good people. Come, pray for me, Virginia; wilt thou?"

They knelt down together, and together their orisons ascended to the skies. As Rainsford contemplated her pale and touching face, and

the calm expression of her reverent eye, cast upwards in the holy abstraction of devotion and love combined,—for she prayed for him she loved and pitied,—he thought to himself that now, now was the time; now that her mind was divested of all worldly dross, and her soul already half-way on its flight to heaven. Twice—thrice did he put his hand into his bosom; thrice he felt the sharp-pointed weapon; and thrice he shuddered and snatched his hand away, as if he had met the fangs of the rattlesnake. Virginia did not seem to observe him; her spirit appeared communing with intelligences high seated above the stars, that now one by one began to twinkle dimly in various portions of the heavens. When she was about to rise from the ground, he gently detained her with a trembling hand.

"Not yet, not quite yet, Virginia; let me look on you a moment longer."

She remained still kneeling, and looking in his face with a tearful eye, so mild, so confiding, so affectionate, that the wild purpose of his wayward intellect became every moment more difficult to execute. Again, however, the dark thought crossed his mind, which was becoming every moment more chaotic from the struggles it was sustaining, that if she lived he should still love her, and she him, and thus both their souls would be jeopardized by indulging in worldly thoughts, worldly enjoyments, and worldly pursuits, to the neglect of all others. "We will go to heaven together," thought he; and again he put his hand in his bosom; again he felt and grasped the weapon of death, while such was his fearful agitation, that Virginia

was overpowered with a feeling of tenderness and pity. She placed her soft white hand, now cold with her emotions, against his colder fore head, damp with the dews of agony, and exclaimed, in a voice of touching melody,—

"Poor, poor Rainsford!"

He took her hand gently away, and was about to put it to his lips, when, suddenly letting it go, he exclaimed,—

"No, I have sworn it, and will not die with the weight of perjury on my soul! Look, Virginia, yonder is the evening star, the star of love's queen, just hiding behind the distant hills."

She turned her head to look at the star, and as she contemplated it a few moments, he snatched the weapon from his bosom, raised it, and—

"It is impossible! it is impossible!" he cried aloud; "my soul shall perish first!" and, rushing into the adjoining wood, he disappeared, leaving Virginia to return home by herself; to ponder and mourn over his wayward eccentricities, and indulge her despair of ever being happy with him.

She found, in addition to the family circle, assembled in the parlour, the wandering preacher, Mr. Bushfield, and the Black Warrior, who had come to ask a supply of ammunition from the colonel, as was his usual custom. The Indians, however high-minded and independent in other respects, are, like all mankind in their primitive state, careless of the rights of property, extremely avaricious, equally prodigal, and notorious for asking for every thing. When a chief

introduces a young warrior to a white dignitary west of the Mississippi, his eulogium is as follows:—"He is a brave warrior, a great horse-thief, and very considerable of a beggar."

The itinerant and the Black Warrior were talking about the creation of the world, the former having made a dead set at the latter with a view of converting him. The truth is, he was one of those whose well-meant yet ill-timed zeal intrudes itself everywhere, and on all occasions. He seemed to think, and no doubt did persuade himself, that his profession emancipated him from the rules of propriety and good breeding which govern all well-bred people. He had already banished the cheerful hilarity, the innocent freedom which usually pervaded the social circle, and caused a restraint that destroyed all the pleasure of the little party. When Bushfield dwelt with his usual eloquence on the pleasures of the chase, the delights of living alone, and having nobody to stand in your daylight, he took occasion sternly to reprehend the sport as interfering with the ceaseless care which was necessary to the salvation of the soul. When Colonel Dangerfield spoke to his son of the charms of eloquence and poetry, the pleasures attendant on the acquisition of knowledge, he denounced all these as temptations of the evil one to detach us from the one thing needful. When Mrs. Dangerfield happened to mention the domestic happiness of one of her friends, and the attachment which subsisted between the wife and the husband, the children and their parents, he called all the domestic affections nothing but carnal lusts of the flesh,

leading us into the flowery paths of temptation. When the duties a man owes to his country and his fellow-citizens were insisted on, he placed patriotism in that class of worldly feelings which interfere with the more important interests of the immortal soul; and when Mr. Littlejohn lauded the delights of luxuriating on three chairs, he treated him as little better than one of the wicked. All this was said and done with an arrogant assumption of superiority, an air of harsh, uncompromising bigotry, which answered no other purpose than to make the most mild, amiable, forgiving, and lenient faith ever propounded to mankind appear directly the reverse of what it really is. Nothing is so unbecoming in a divine as the absence of humility; for how can he who arrays himself in the trappings of pride and presumption correct those vices in the rest of mankind, or enforce those precepts which his practice every day belies?

The Black Warrior was sitting near a window, smoking his pipe, a privilege allowed him by Mrs. Dangerfield, when the over-zealous man made a demonstration towards him. The Indian listened with great gravity and decorum, as the red men always do to what is said to them, while he was giving a sketch of the Mosaic account of the creation of the world, the deluge, the ark, and the subsiding of the universal waste of waters. When he had finished, the Black Warrior waited some minutes to allow him an opportunity of continuing if he wished, and then, taking his pipe from his mouth, gravely replied,—

"You white black-coats tell big lies. Him you call Adam no first man. My father long way off first man, and he was named in English *Sour Mush;* he father of all my tribe, and not Adam, as you say. Listen! the Great Spirit want somebody to live below here, and he say to my father, 'You go down yonder, and make people.' Well, he set out; at first he go very well; then, when he got little way farther, he go too fast, bang! down, down, down,—hardly fetch breath, he go so fast. Well, by'm-by come birds, and put their wings under him, and let him down easy, very easy, and put him softly on the top of a tree on a high mountain. Well, he set there one, two, three day, and at last he grow very hungry, want to eat mighty much, and he say so to the Great Spirit; and Great Spirit tell him, 'Blow, blow on the waters.' Well, he blow, blow, blow, till water only up to his knee down on the prairie. But he say to the Great Spirit, 'May as well be deep like before; nothing to eat yet, very hungry.' Then the Great Spirit tell him blow again, and he send the winds to help him. And he blow, blow, blow, and the winds come and help him blow till all the water go away. Then *Sour Mush* he come down from the mountain, and his feet make deep tracks in soft mud; and, huh! out jump buffalo, deer, elk, and all sorts of game, and so my father get plenty to eat. Then Great Spirit in some time send him a wife, who come right out of a cave in the ground; and so in a great many moons we go to be a great nation. Huh! think Indian

don't know who first man as well as white black-coat?"*

The zealous wanderer was "like all wrath," as Bushfield said, with the poor Indian, for thus asserting his ancient belief. He denounced his tradition as an invention of Satan himself, instead of viewing it philosophically in the light of a strong corroboration of the actual occurrence of that great deluge the dim and vague traditions of which seem to pervade the earliest memorials of every people of the earth.

* This is a genuine tradition of the Osages.

CHAPTER IX.

Bushfield "trees a curious varmint."

THE next morning was signalized by a visit from Mrs. Judith, that woman of evil omen, whom Virginia now trembled to see approaching. She came to announce the disappearance of Rainsford, and that he had not been at home all night. Virginia restrained her emotions on receiving this information, which excited the most fearful forebodings. There was in her heart a union of tenderness and firmness, more often found in women than men; and which, wherever found, is the parent of deep, silent, lasting impressions. A shiver of anguish shook her limbs, a paler hue abided on her cheek, and that was all. She dismissed Mrs. Judith, who denounced her in her private opinion as the most insensible of mortals, to be so little affected on such an occasion; and took the first opportunity of consulting Mrs. Dangerfield. The result was a communication to the colonel, which was immediately followed by a search for the lost wanderer. It appeared, from an examination of his room, that he had taken nothing with him, except the clothes he wore. Nothing remained to give the least clew to his intentions, or to indicate whither he had gone.

Colonel Dangerfield and Leonard lost no time in mustering the men of the village and

despatching them in all directions. But they returned, one by one, at different intervals, in the course of a few days, without having discovered the least traces, or gained the slightest information of the fugitive. Thus they remained in the most harassing uncertainty whether he had wandered no one knew whither, or had made away with himself, none knew how. We will not attempt to describe the feelings of Virginia, during this period of racking doubt; she made no display herself. To the eyes of the villagers, when they occasionally saw her, she appeared to be pursuing her usual course of domestic duties and avocations; and it was only the quick instinct of affection that detected the deep wound she had received. At the expiration of about a fortnight, a boat coming up the river from the Ohio, brought news of the body of a drowned man having been found about a hundred miles below, and though the description of his dress and person was vague and uncertain, there were circumstances enough to produce a conviction it was that of Rainsford. The particulars were cautiously communicated to Virginia, and received in silence. On the bosom of maternal affection she breathed a prayer for the repose of his immortal soul, and his name was mentioned no more.

But she did not think of him the less for saying nothing. She remembered his eloquence, his affection, his gentle kindness, his sufferings, and his death; yet she did not turn her back upon the world, because of a thousand blessings bestowed upon her, she had been deprived of one, though that one was the

dearest of all. Rainsford was seldom absent from her thoughts, and she grew, in time, to think of him as one whom, perhaps, the mercy of Heaven had snatched away from cureless misery, to the enjoyment of happiness. "Better that he should die thus, even thus, and be buried among strangers," she would say to herself, "than live to realize what he has so long anticipated."

Thus passed the time, and Rainsford was considered by all as no longer an inhabitant of this world, when one day as Bushfield returned to his home in the forest, after a long and unsuccessful chase, he found Mammy Phillis in great tribulation at having nothing to give him for supper. He had come home in none of his best humours, for this first disappointment had brought a conviction to his mind that the game was fast emigrating, and that he must soon follow.

"What have you done with all those venison steaks I left hanging up there, you greedy old 'possum?" said he.

"I no eat him, massa."

"You no eat him! who eat him then, I should like to know?"

"Why, gentiman did, tudder day."

"What gentiman, you beautiful snowball?"

"Him go out all day wid massa, and shoot nothin."

"What, Rainsford?"

"Ees, massa, here dis morning, and take away ebery ting he lay hands on."

"Why, you fool, he's been dead, I don't know

how long; he was drowned, or drowned himself in the Kentucky."

Phillis screamed. "Ah! den him must be him's spook. I tought he no eat like Christian."

"Pshaw, who ever heard of a spook eating?"

"Huh! I guess dem eat well as udder folks. I see spooks eat when I was in my own country. I see plenty dare. All black, jus like me."

"A black ghost!" cried Bushfield, breaking into a loud laugh. "I'd as soon think of a white nigger. But what are you talking about seeing poor Rainsford's ghost. Come tell me all about it."

By dint of questioning he drew from her the following details. It appears she was occupied in eating her breakfast, very intently, when on a sudden a man, who she persisted was Rainsford, bolted into the house, seized some of the victuals, and began to devour them, as she said, like a hungry wolf. He soon cleared the table, and then helped himself to all the eatables he could find, which he was carrying away, when he seemed suddenly to recollect himself, put his hand in his pocket and threw her some money, exclaiming at the same time, with a laugh, "There—there's the reckoning, the price of a priest's religion, a lawyer's conscience, and a patriot's vote. There, you angel of darkness, go buy a white skin, and then you may bear false witness against your neighbour, as well as your betters."

Phillis further stated that he was very ragged; had a long beard; a bloodshot eye;

and looked as if he were almost starved to death.

"Poor creature!" said Bushfield, drawing the sleeve of his hunting shirt across his eyes. "But I shall tree him to-morrow."

"What, tree spook?" chuckled old Phillis. "Ecod, I believe massa tink he tree any ting."

Bushfield went to bed, that is to say, laid down on his bearskin, outside the house, under a spreading tree, and slept as well without his supper as with it, for he did not mind such trifles as four-and-twenty hours' abstinence. In the morning, bright and early, before the dew was off the ground, he called unto him old Phillis, and bade her show him, if she knew, which way the spook went. She did so, and he whistled his dogs, placed them on the scent, and followed with his rifle on his shoulder. The dogs pursued a devious winding course, through the most difficult passes of the forest, until they reached a rocky eminence, which formed the dividing line between two neighbouring streams. It was a wild savage scene, remote from the usual haunts of the hunters. A signal from the hounds at a distance, indicating that they discovered something, caused Bushfield to hasten to the spot, where he beheld the Black Warrior, standing at bay, with his rifle pointed at one of the dogs, which was the most clamorous and troublesome.

"Don't hurt the sweet varmints," cried he, "or its likely I may hurt *you*, anyhow."

Bushfield "hated an Ingen mightily;" and, to do him justice, he had tolerable good reasons for it. But he would not have harmed one, ex-

cept in self-defence, as he called defending his dogs, on any account. He called them off, and they commenced a parley.

"Game very scarce now," said the Black Warrior. "Indian must soon go cross the great river."

"Yes, and white man too, if he wants to follow the track of the deer. Have you seen any game?"

"No, only squirrel, he no worth powder and shot. Has the white man seen any?"

"O, I'm on another track. I'm hunting a white man."

"Eh! I reckoned white man only hunted Indian that way."

Bushfield explained to him his object; and the Black Warrior offered his aid.

"I like Misser Rainford, he sometime fill my pouch wid tobacco."

"We shall only be in each other's way, like a couple of fellers in the same track."

"Room enough here for white man and red skin. White man want all room to himself," muttered the Indian. "But I must help find Misser Rainford."

They proceeded in different directions, after agreeing to fire their guns in case of any discovery; and had pursued their search for some time, when the forest echoed with the report of the Black Warrior's rifle. Bushfield hastened in the direction, and found the Indian standing guard at the foot of a high rock, on the very verge of which was a figure scarcely human, capering, and shouting, and looking down, as if in scorn of the intruder. Sometimes he

shook his fist at him, and grinned. Sometimes he would laugh aloud; and at others pelt him with sticks or stones. Bushfield approached close to the foot of the rock, and he seemed for a moment confused with some recollection, while he looked wistfully down upon him. He then shouted and disappeared; then returned again, laughing and capering like a child playing at bo-peep; and finally, sat himself down, with his legs hanging over the edge of the high rock, making faces at them.

Bushfield called him by name, and entreated him to come down to his friends.

"Ah hah! catch me at that," cried he, laughing. "I know what you want; you want to chain me; you want to clap me up in a dungeon, and set a tiger to watch me. No, no, I know a thing worth two of that. Whiz! look here," and he cut a huge caper, and sat down again. "Here I am, a gentleman commoner of nature. I can go where I please, and do as I please, without asking leave of the parson, the lawyer, the justice, or of those good people who would kill me with kindness to save my life."

"I'll be shot if he don't talk more like common sense than many roarers I have heard make speeches in court, in my time, anyhow. I think if I could only get a fight out of him, I'd bring him to, pretty quick," said Bushfield to his associate.

They consulted together on the best method of securing the wretched outcast, and at length finally agreed on a plan. It was obvious that he could not be secured where he was by any

mode of attack or approach; for the side of the rock nearest them was inaccessible, and, if assailed in the rear, there was great reason to fear he would dash himself down, and perish.

"Somehow or other," said Bushfield, "I don't think it a matter worth crying for if he did, anyhow. But who knows, after all, but the poor feller has some kind of pleasure in this sort of out-door life that I don't know any thing about? He's a free man, and that's something. He can lay down and drink of the *branch* without a cup, which is what I call being independent, anyhow."

As neither had any food with them, it was determined to go home, and return the next day with a supply, which they were to leave in a conspicuous spot near the haunt of Rainsford, in the expectation he would be compelled by the wants of nature to come and take it. Each was to hide himself in some convenient nook for intercepting a retreat to his stronghold.

Accordingly they took leave of the maniac, who told them to go and catch birds with fresh salt, and saluted them with a volley of stones, and returned to their respective homes. The next day they put their plan into execution, and awaited the result in their hiding-places. Some hours elapsed, and the poor wanderer did not appear. But about midday they heard his laugh, and presently after saw him approach the place where the food had been placed, which he seized and devoured with the eager avidity of a famished tiger. When he had done, he laid himself down quietly, and fell asleep at the foot of a tree.

Now was the time, and now the white man and the red put in practice the tactics of the warfare of the woods. They lay down on their faces, and crawled along like wily snakes in the grass, dragging their rifles after them, until within striking distance; when Bushfield, who never took odds, he said, against man or beast, motioning the Black Warrior to halt where he was, rose, and with the spring of a tiger pounced upon the sleeping Rainsford, whose arms he seized with the gripe of a vice, as he was wont to boast. A struggle now ensued, too violent to be lasting; after a few convulsive, phrenetic efforts, accompanied by demonstrations of ferocious anger, the strength of the poor maniac became quite exhausted, and he remained on the ground perfectly quiescent, as is the case with persons of this class when they find themselves fairly mastered.

He lay for a time with his eyes shut, and the Black Warrior now brought some fresh grapevines he had cut, for the purpose of binding his hands behind him; but Bushfield demurred to this.

"No, hang it, redskin, I could never yet find in my heart to bind a free white man. There are two of us; I'm half a whole team, and you the other half; and it's a hard case if we can't manage him without disgracing the poor cretur."

"True," said the Black Warrior; "and then the Great Spirit would be angry if we hurt him, for you know he loves all mad people can't take care of themselves. Great Spirit make prophet of 'em sometimes; love 'em very much. I most

forget that; glad I not lay hold of him like you. Never shoot deer any more if I hurt him."

"What ignorant Turks these Indians are," thought Bushfield, "to believe in such crossing of the track as this. I'm a nigger if I think this copper-washed man is a right clean, full-blooded feller-cretur."

Nothing is more passive than raging passion when once overcome. Rainsford now rose from the ground, and stood stock still, with a subdued look, and languid expression of the eye. His head, legs, bosom, and arms were bare; and as Bushfield noted the bruises and the marks which he had been forced to inflict upon the poor youth, he felt his eyes grow dim. He took his passive hand, shook it with honest fervour, and, as if he thought himself understood, made his apology for having treated him so roughly. "If I hadn't sooner eat *garbroth* with a real nigger, may I never see a tree nigh enough to my house to make a fire without the help of a cart and oxen," said he. "But come, stranger, I think now you'd best go home again. There's the colonel and his lady are on the wrong scent about you, and Miss Virginia looks as white as an eggshell."

"Virginia?" said Rainsford, "Virginia? ay, Old Virginia. I've heard of her; she never tires, they say."

"Old Virginia! no, I mean young Virginia, the yellow flower of the forest, the sweetest sap that ever was boiled into maple sugar. O, she's a beauty, anyhow. Have you forgot Virginia Dangerfield, that I hear you were going to be married to when you cut this caper?"

"Dangerfield! yes, now I recollect, that was the name of the old beggar that cursed my grandfather; he that was once an old black woman that I stole venison from, and cooked it on a gridiron made of the ribs of a rogue that was gibbeted. Yes, yes—O, I remember it all as if it was the day after to-morrow."

"Then you will go with us?"

"To be sure I will. Give us your hand; your fingers are as soft as iron bars, almost as soft as Virginia's—I mean Old Virginia, that never tires. As I was saying—but you talked about going to be married just now, didn't you? Now, if I marry anybody, it shall be the black beauty I met t'other day, who gave me a good dinner; but she made me pay for it. Look here! what a grip she gave me!" and he held out his bare bruised arms.

"Come then with me, and I will take you to your friends, and they shall take care of you," said Bushfield, who long afterwards declared he never had felt so since the time he lost his mother and little sister at one shot.

"Well, come on; I'm a free man now, and ready for a frolic anywhere. But don't talk of being married, for that is the shortest cut to the devil; the parson told me so. Come, don't look as if I was lying about it. I tell you he swore to me once by—I forget what it was—by the sole of his shoe, that if the sky should happen to fall, there would be a great squabble about the stars. For my part, I should go for Saturn, because he falls the farthest, and is a great traveller. Hurrah, boys! come along; but here,

Mister—what's your name?—O, Dangerfield—Mr. Dangerfield, you'll bring that old sexton there with you, because I expect to be married. It's curious," whispered he to Bushfield, "but I seem as if I remembered backwards, as a crab goes to church. Hurrah! come to the funeral, and then for the plum-cake and a lying epitaph."

So saying, he took Bushfield by the arm, and they went their way towards the village of Dangerfieldville, where they arrived in the dusk of the evening; Rainsford so fatigued, that he fell into a deep sleep immediately. Persons were appointed by Colonel Dangerfield to watch him, that he might not wander away into the woods again.

CHAPTER X.

A glimpse of sunshine darkened.

It would have been a wonder to distance all the other wonders of the world had Virginia remained ignorant of the discovery and arrival of Rainsford any longer than Mrs. Judith Paddock took to cross the way and tell the story. It is hard to say what were her feelings on this occasion, and for that reason we will not attempt to delineate them. She could receive no joy at his return in the state Mrs. Judith described, and still less could she find in her heart to regret that he had not perished in the manner before related. Certain it is, however, that she was observed to lose that quiet air of resignation which had followed the loss of hope; and from this time forward her watchful mother detected in her manner and conduct all the indications of a mind agitated by conflicting emotions.

The paroxysm in which Rainsford was found in the forest had arisen as much from hunger, exposure, and the miserable roots and berries he had subsisted on for some days, as from any predisposing cause. And he awoke the next morning, after snatches of sleep disturbed by occasional starts and ravings, in a quiet state of gloomy languor, which encouraged Mrs. Judith to venture on the gratification of her curi

osity, by paying him a visit in his accustomed room, where he had been secured for the present. He paid little attention to her or her questions, until, apparently wearied and fatigued, he looked sternly at her, and exclaimed,—

"Get thee behind me, Satan; I know you of old. You have been at me many a time before with that ugly black face and cloven foot. You needn't try to hide it or your face either; for if your husband's a fool I am not; I can see with half an eye you've got a split foot, and horns on your head, just like an ox."

Mrs. Judith was exceedingly wroth at this unseemly blunder; for well saith the great poet, "Use lessens marvel," and it is the happiness of mankind, as well as womankind, that by dint of frequent contemplation in the looking-glass, they not only become reconciled to, but peradventure enamoured of, deformity. We may call this vanity, but in our minds it is the true essence of philosophy; for where would be the use of pining over those infirmities which it hath pleased Providence to inflict upon us, and which all the regrets in the world, so far from alleviating, only tend to make ten thousand times more painful. To laugh at such delusions as contribute to the happiness of the unfortunate only shows the folly and ill-nature of mankind. We have before hinted that Mrs. Judith was, as it were, one of nature's most masterly blunders; but if she admired herself, so much the better for her husband; for it was the cause of a certain dulcet humour of which he reaped much of the benefits. But this sortie of poor Rainsford against her beauty irritated

ner sorely, and she bounced out of the room, declaring that, however she might have doubted before, all the world would not persuade her now that he was not as mad as a March hare. The unhappy youth sat down and burst into a hearty laugh; but whether from a remote perception of the ridiculous or not, is difficult to decide. There is certainly a mischievous wilfulness in deranged intellects that has sometimes almost persuaded us that such a state of mind often consists less in the inability than the inclination to restrain its excesses. Anger is justly denominated a short madness; yet it is ever under the restraint of prudence, and we doubt if the most furious victim of that passion would dare to exhibit it in the presence of the man he feared.

Various were the consultations of Colonel Dangerfield with his wife and son as to the best mode of disposing of this unfortunate young man, with whose friends and former residence they were totally unacquainted. Dangerfieldville not being the county town, there was neither court-house nor jail in which he might be secured until he regained, if he ever regained, his reason; and it was obvious that the chamber of Master Zeno would be insufficient to retain him if he should be determined on escaping. It was proposed to insert a description of his person and situation in the Western Sun, in the hope of his being recognised by his family, if he had any; but to this Virginia, who often joined in these consultations, strenuously objected.

"If he should ever recover," said she, "I know

his sensitive feelings will shrink from such an exposure."

"Alas! I fear all hope of his recovery is vain," replied Mrs. Dangerfield.

"He who deprived him of his reason can restore it, mother."

"My dear child, you know not how difficult it is to heal the shattered intellect of a rational being."

"Not so difficult, dear mother, as to create a rational being." She paused, and resumed, in a hesitating voice, "Now that you are here together, I have a proposal to make, a wish to gratify, if I dared to ask permission."

"What is it, my love? said Mrs. Dangerfield.

"I—I wish to see Mr. Rainsford once—once more. I have a hope—a presentiment I may almost call it—that he would know me, and that I might sooth his calamity, if nothing more. Will you permit me to make the trial?"

"For heaven's sake! for our sakes, Virginia, abandon the idea. I shudder at the thought of such an exposure. Suppose, in a paroxysm of phrensy, he should tear you to pieces. Such things have happened."

"Ah! I fear him not, my mother. There must yet remain some little recollection of what —what we have been, and were to be to each other, that the sight of me, the sound of my voice will awaken. I beseech you, as you value my peace, I might say my life, to let me see him once more. I should never know the repose of a moment, if I were not conscious of having done all that my heart suggested to me as possible to awaken poor Rainsford to a recol-

lection of himself, if only for one moment. Let me, let me go, or perhaps I may become one day like him."

The solemn earnestness, the hope, however hopeless, with which she urged her request, at length wrought on them all to consent to her visiting the unhappy young man once more. It was arranged that the colonel and Leonard should accompany her, and remain just without the door, while she should enter alone. The mother inquired when it should be, and Virginia hesitated, and trembled for a moment, ere she uttered the single monosyllable,

"Now."

Leonard went over to ascertain the state of the patient; and in the mean while Virginia arrayed herself in a gown of spotless white, not whiter than her pale cheek and forehead, over which her chestnut hair was smoothly parted, in that most beautiful and simplest form of delicate womanhood. "I am ready," said she, firmly; and she took the arm of her father, and walked with a steady step to the place of meeting. When just outside the door she paused and faltered; but it was soon over; and the door being opened, she entered.

Rainsford, who had been persuaded to suffer himself to be dressed and shaved, in one of his good-natured intervals, was sitting with his back towards the door, his body inclined forward, and his head depressed on his bosom, employed in picking a little fragment of linen in pieces. He paid no attention to her entrance, and she had an opportunity of recovering her firmness, before she uttered, in the sweetest

music that ever floated on the balmy breath of spring, the single word,

"Dudley Rainsford!"

He suddenly whirled himself round on his chair; but it was evident the sound, and not the sense, had roused him, for he displayed no symptoms of recognising the person who gave it utterance.

"He has forgotten me!" sighed Virginia; and she was obliged to lean against the wall for support.

"What!" cried he, at length, after looking at her awhile; "what! are you come back again, with your cloven foot and horns? Don't you know I have sworn to put to death all the handsome Jezebels in the creation; because I have it from the best possible authority they keep more honest men from heaven than the very old boy himself. Go away, go away, or I shall fall in love with that deceitful handsome face of yours."

"Dudley Rainsford!" said Virginia, coming nearer, "don't you know Virginia?"

"What, Old Virginia? Yes, I think I have heard of such a trifle; but don't come near me, stand off; I don't choose to lose my soul for a woman, I can tell you. Though when I look at you, I think I might run the risk, for you put me in mind of a little angel I once saw in a dream."

Virginia approached yet nearer, and placed her hand on his brow. "What, you will come, hey! You're determined I shall roast, as the old black woman, that made me pay so dear for my dinner, said. Look here what a price for

a dinner." And he stripped up his sleeve, and showed the deep marks of the struggle with Bushfield.

Virginia could not speak, but she hung over him, and the scalding tears fell on his forehead. In those beautiful fictions of poetry and romance which are now almost overwhelmed by the barren exuberance of their successors, it has been fabled that the ferocity of the lion was tamed by the divinity of virgin purity and gentleness. Even so with Rainsford. He felt the tears trickle on his forehead; he felt the balmy breath breathing in his face; and all at once he seemed to be recalled to some faint yet organized traces of the incidents of his former life. He looked at her intensely, a few moments, then took her hand and kissed it, as he softly exclaimed,

"Virginia! are you not afraid of me?"

"O! he knows me now!" cried she, in a burst of joy.

"Yes, I do know thee; and I have broken the oath I made once. I remember—where was it? no matter, I am lost now. I see it. I am doomed to howl, howl, as the preacher said; and all because I didn't do it when I had so good an opportunity. But I am glad I did not, for I had rather howl than harm thee, Virginia."

She sat down by his side, her hand in his; and for a little while, apparently with continued efforts, he mastered his malady sufficiently to avoid incoherence. But the exertion was too great for him; by degrees he began to lose all power of arrangement; and the last effort of

his departing reason was to beseech, to command her to leave him.

"Go! go! it is written I shall shed blood; let it not be yours!"

The colonel and Leonard Dangerfield were alarmed at the increasing loudness of his voice, and showing themselves at the door, beckoned her to come forth. She obeyed them unwillingly; and the moment she left the room, Rainsford started up, shut the door violently, and exclaimed,

"There! there! now she's safe; and let me howl and welcome. Who says I'm not a hero to give away my soul for a woman?"

The interview, however painful to her feelings, was on the whole calculated to cherish a latent spark of hope in the bosom of Virginia. That he had known her; that he had for a few minutes, at least, enjoyed an interval of recollection, indicated that his mind was not irretrievably gone. Kindness, care, and perseverance might do much, perhaps might do every thing necessary to the restoration of his reason, and she had long accustomed herself to think that both affection and gratitude demanded all her exertions to save him. She accordingly settled it in her mind that she would repeat the experiment every day, as long as there remained any hope.

She communicated her wishes to her mother, who, observing her pale cheek, tearful eye, and agitated frame, was fearful such a plan would end rather in being fatal to her health, than effectual in regard to the unfortunate Rainsford.

She endeavoured to persuade her that seeing him every day would gradually undermine her happiness for the rest of her life, and destroy that strength of mind so essential to its dignity and usefulness. The reply of Virginia was as remarkable as it was true.

"My dear mother, I am young, but I have lived long enough, and suffered enough, to know by my own experience that those evils we shrink from are always the most terrible to the imagination. What we are not afraid to look upon we are not half so much afraid of as if we turned away from it in fear or horror. I had pictured poor Rainsford as a raving maniac, divested as well of the form of humanity, as of the attributes of reason; but I found him still fair and gentle, and can almost think of him with pleasure again."

"Well, then, my dear daughter, take your own way; for it is not the weak vanity of a mother, nor her childish indulgence, which make me say, that so help me Heaven, as I believe I might trust you everywhere, where intellect and virtue are the safeguards of woman."

CHAPTER XI.

A touch of scholarship, an elopement, and a discussion on equality.

It was one laughing morn in the merry month of June, when the redbirds sung, the grasshoppers chirped—we mean the crickets chirped, the grasshoppers flitted their circumscribed flights, the little yellow butterflies were solacing themselves in the moisture of the roadside, and the luxurious swine, the sole aristocracy of this republic, since they enjoy every thing without labour, banquet on the fat of the land, and are marvellously short-lived, were wallowing in the very mire of sentiment. It was on such a morning, for ever hallowed in our remembrance as the season of luxurious abstractions, delicious languors, and visionary flights of fancy,—it was on such a morning that the veritable Zeno Paddock and his wife were sitting at breakfast, sipping tea and politics. Zeno exchanged with one paper at least in each of the twenty-two states at that time in being, and read them all, every soul of them; by reason of which he had so many errors to correct, so many recreants to chastise, and such a mass of political heresies to expose to the world, that he hardly knew which way to turn himself. He was at this

moment poring over a number of his great antagonist the Eastern Star, when all at once he jumped from his chair, as if a Chinese cracker had exploded under his nose. Mrs. Judith was smitten with a tender curiosity, and inquired what was the matter; he handed her the paper, pointing at the same time to a certain article, and exclaiming,—

"There, there—he, he! Judy, what do you think of that? I'm a stunted pedant! I don't know a B from a bull's foot!—he, he!"—and he fluttered about in a paroxysm of wounded vanity.

It seems this learned Theban had in an evil hour essayed, in the triumph of his heart, to enact the critic on divers occasions, having been so successful in detecting the falsehoods of the new court almanac concerning the weather. He undertook to write an article on a volume of poetry published by a young man at Lexington, as we believe, in the which he made a desperate plunge into the bowels of antiquity. He first compared Aristotle and the Stagyrite in philosophy, giving it as his opinion that the latter was the deeper of the two by all odds. From thence he sallied out into the regions of "crack-sculled Parnassus," where he committed great ravages among the laurels and other evergreens. He asserted roundly that, whatever might be said to the contrary, there was no comparison between Homer and the great Melesigenes; that Virgil could not hold a candle to Maro; and that the Mantuan swain, who was a self-taught shepherd, was superior

to both. He pronounced Horace's Odes to be inimitable, and far more spirited than those of his great rivals Quintus and Flaccus; and concluded by pronouncing a certain pope of Rome, whose name he had forgot, though he believed it was Pope Alexander, the first poet among the moderns, partly because he was so easy on man, one of the most difficult of all subjects; and partly because he wrote a beautiful poem on a fellow stealing the lock of a door.

For all these multifarious offences his great antagonist of the Eastern Star did take him up roundly, denying all his positions, and pronouncing him "a stunted pedant," the most opprobrious of all epithets to a man of function like Zeno. He denied *in toto* that the Stagyrite, or Stageright, as he called him, was any way equal to Aristotle, who discovered the immortality of the soul; or that either Melesigenes, or Maro, or the Mantuan swain, or Quintus, or Flaccus could any way compare with Homer, Virgil, Horace, or even Mecænas. As for Pope Alexander, he never heard of but one pope who made verses, and that was Pope Joan. He concluded by saying he thought Mæonides, upon the whole, the first poet of antiquity, though most of the critics preferred Homer.

Mercy on us! how Zeno did fume, and how sincerely and with what fervour Mrs. Judith sympathized with him! True, she had called the profound Zeno a blockhead and pedant a thousand times; but that was altogether a different affair from other people calling him so. For that wife must be more or less than woman

who, when it comes to the pinch, won't take sides with her good man against all the world, though she may fully agree with it in her own private opinion. There is no saying what would have been the result of this holy alliance of the high contracting powers; for before they could agree upon the protocol they were interrupted by the entrance of Leonard Dangerfield, who came to inquire into the state and condition of poor Rainsford.

The room occupied by this unfortunate young gentleman was at the extremity and in the rear of the house, and, though not actually in durance, the door was kept carefully locked, and one of the villagers employed in watching outside during the night. It seemed to have escaped the notice of his friends, or perhaps they did not think it material, that there was a window not five feet from the ground, which, though nailed down, yet was not impassable to a desperate man. The person appointed to mount guard slept as soundly as most watchmen do in some great cities which shall be nameless, and with such a quiet conscience, that nothing less than the last trumpet would have roused him before his time.

Under these circumstances, it does not altogether amount to a miracle that when the door was opened the prisoner was *non est inventus*. On examination, it was found that the nails which fastened the window had been removed by some one of those cunning expedients so common with people in his situation, and that he had escaped in that way; but at what time of the night there were no means of judging,

nor were there the least indications to point out the course he had pursued. All traces of him were lost, and all subsequent inquiries proved fruitless in this remote quarter, where people lived at a distance from each other, and held little communication with the rest of the world. The new-born hope awakened in the bosom of Virginia was thus for ever blighted; and the bow that had for a moment been forced into elasticity became more relaxed than before. It was, indeed, almost a mortal blow; and it is not surprising if, after so many trials, she sank into a state of almost hopeless depression.

But the sun rose and set as usual, the people of the village continued their daily occupations, and the people of the world followed their example. What was it to them if a hair-brained wanderer was let loose upon the surface of that slippery bubble called life, to scramble his way in beggary, and perish haply by the road-side? or that a tender-hearted girl was mourning his fate in the silence of despair? Men must eat and die, and worms must eat them; the world must go on; and, happily for the race of insects that crawl upon it, the sum total of the woes of life amounts to no more than that which falls to the share of each single individual; and that is enough in all conscience.

Zeno continued to fire his paper pellets briskly at the head of his antagonist, who blazed away in turn; and it came to pass at length, that according to the good old way of the world, they were miraculously reconciled by the interposition of a third party in the war of criticism, who most unceremoniously knocked their pates

together, and denounced them as a couple of blockheads, so equally ignorant that none but the great mathematician who subtracted nothing from nothing, and found to his astonishment that nothing remained, could decide between these two incomprehensible nonentities. From that moment they united their forces against the common enemy, and were ever after held together by the cement of a common enmity.

But the condition of Mrs. Judith after the departure of Rainsford, and the total seclusion of Virginia, was most to be deplored; for now she had scarcely a peg on which to hang even a shred of curiosity. Not to speak irreverently of the divinity of woman, she might be likened unto a hound at fault; she tripped about the village this way and that, in all directions, poking her nose here, and there, and everywhere, with a wistful look of inquiry, an anxious, business-like air, exceedingly edifying. It happened, by a miraculous interposition, as cruel as it was unaccountable, that there was not a single secret to be had in all the village. Such a dearth, such a famine was never known within the memory of the oldest gossip; and there is reason to fear that it would have been all over with Mrs. Judith Paddock, had she not most providentially, on the sixth day of her abstinence, detected a stranger riding into the town with an umbrella over his head. What he could want of an umbrella, when it neither rained nor did the sun shine, puzzled her to the quick. But when he stopped at the house of Colonel Dangerfield, which was now renewed in more than its pristine glories, to the great exultation of that pillar of the aristocracy Pom-

pey Ducklegs, she became one of the happiest of women; for she was sure there was a secret in embryo, if not already in being. In addition to this, Leonard Dangerfield departed about this time to take his seat in the Assembly; and next to an arrival in a village is a departure from it. Altogether, Mrs. Judith became quite comfortable; and in this state of salubrity we shall leave her for the present.

The stranger, whose opportune arrival had given such absolute content to Mrs. Judith, was a stout, well-made, ruddy-faced man, it may be about five-and-forty, who wore a pair of fancy cord breeches, a pair of white-top boots, and a gray coat with covered buttons. On the top of his head was his hair, and on the top of his hair his hat, which was a beaver of most respectable dimensions as to brim, if not as to crown. His hair consisted of a profusion of short stiff curls, resembling what the illustrious Manuel, now figuring in the dressing-room of Death, whilom did call "everlasting," baked—yea, by this light, baked!—like a brown loaf in the oven! Whether it was a wig, or whether his own crop, whether a work of nature or of art, we must leave to Mrs. Judith Paddock to ferret out; solemnly pledging ourselves to the curious reader, who doth inordinately dote on these man-milliner matters, that if she ever at any future period penetrates this important affair, we will forthwith apprize him of it by a telegraphic despatch. Altogether, this remarkable stranger, who looked out of his eyes just like other people, had that about him which we call respectable; and if we might judge from

certain marks which constitute national identity, he was a native of what the old bards once called "merry England."

Such as he was, he rode up to the door of Colonel Dangerfield, and was detected by Mrs. Judith in the very act of delivering a letter; the reception of which was immediately followed by his dismounting from his horse, and entering the hospitable door, which, as in poor old Ireland, they say always opens in Kentucky of itself on the arrival of a stranger.

"I'll lay my life," exclaimed Mrs. Judith, clapping her hands, "he brings news of the runaway." But Mrs. Judith was mistaken for once in her life.

He was described in the letter to Colonel Dangerfield as an English country gentleman of easy fortune, who, having three or four months to spare previous to the hunting season, had taken a voyage across the Atlantic to see the Falls of Niagara, and satisfy himself, by a close and minute investigation of the true state of the country, by riding through it as fast as a comet. He was a scholar, a liberal, and a sensible man; but, like all his countrymen, he was ever in a desperate hurry when he travelled. In a stage, he scolded, or bribed the driver to get on; and he was once nearly annihilated by being obliged to travel twenty miles on a canal. In this we profess to sympathize with him most heartily. He had been spoiled by whirling on railroads; and more than once astounded our whips, who thought they were doing wonders, by exclaiming, in all the impatience of incurable languor,—

"Zounds! my good fellow, how slow you travel!"

A steamboat of eight or ten miles an hour was intolerable; and if haply he had got hold of the tail of a comet, he would have bribed the driver to go a *little* faster. Never man was in such a hurry to get to a place except this selfsame gentleman, when he got there, to get away from it. He had made the grand tour in five weeks; and on being questioned by Colonel Dangerfield how he could "make tracks," as Bushfield would say, at such a rate, his reply was perfectly characteristic.

"Why, sir, you must know, I always had a courier in advance to order my meals, so that they were sure to be ready on my arrival, and allowed myself only an hour to eat them. In this way I found it very delightful; for I always had a good dinner, and escaped the horrors of being detained in a French or Italian town."

Yet with this foible, which, we believe, is common to all your islanders, whose insular situation generates a feeling of "circumscription and confine," and instigates a desire of escaping, as it were, Mr. Barham was a man of estimable qualities, of an enlarged mind and liberal spirit.

If ever an American and an Englishman got together in this world, old or new, without talking politics, and disagreeing about them, it was not in our presence. It happened in the course of the evening of the arrival of Mr. Barham, that a neighbour, a tradesman, brought home a pair of shoes, or something of that sort, for one of the family; and was, as usual, asked

in, and treated as every man of good character was sure to be treated by the family of Colonel Dangerfield. He was invited to sit down, to "take something." And after talking about the news, the crops, and the election, quietly took his leave. Mr. Barham felt as if a pig had run against him, and soiled his white-top boots, and could not refrain from shrugging his shoulders a little, as the colonel shook him kindly by the hand and bade good night. Dangerfield saw and comprehended the shrug, and determined to have a bout with the stranger the first opportunity. This is never wanting to two men ready cocked and primed, especially an American and an Englishman. Mr. Barham soon took occasion to utter the word equality, with a certain equivocal sarcastic tone, which is sufficiently expressive to apprehensive ears; and the colonel snapped his rifle directly.

"You don't approve of our system of equality, I perceive, Mr. Barham."

"To be frank, for you know we Englishmen always speak our minds, I do not."

"Why so, sir?"

"Why, because I don't like the intrusive familiarities of the vulgar; nor do I believe any system of government can subsist for a length of time without a decided broad distinction of ranks."

"Why so, sir?"

"Because my own reading, reflection, and experience have satisfied me that equality in any respect, either as to rank or fortune, is an impracticable, ruinous theory, which never can be realized."

"I differ with you, Mr. Barham. As to you reading and reflection, I will say nothing, for my maxim is, to appeal to experience, wherever resort can be had to it. May I ask whence you derive your conviction of the impossibility of a system of equality as far as ranks are concerned?"

"From England, sir, from my own country."

"I don't exactly see how your experience can have any application to England, because she has never tried the system of equality, and can therefore know nothing of its impracticability, or its ruinous effects, if it were practicable."

"Why, sir, don't we every day see the consequences of the mob getting uppermost; destruction of property and lives?"

"That is just because there is no equality among you, and not because there is. It is the sense of inequality, and its attendant wants and mortifications, that produce these violent eruptions of popular discontent. If you choose to call the people of this country all equal, very good. You don't see any mobs in Kentucky, nor anywhere else, except among those who bring with them from abroad those habits, and feelings, and old antipathies generated by the very absence of equality."

"But how is it possible for one man to have a proper respect for another, without some feeling of inferiority on his part? Without this, society must become a perfect bear-garden, and the intercourse between people essentially vulgar and indiscriminate," said Mr. Barham.

"That does not necessarily follow; nay, it

does not follow at all. Surely, Mr. Barham, you cannot believe that courtesy, respect, and a due regard to the claims and feelings of others cannot be maintained without a sense of inferiority on one part, and of superiority on the other. Is there no such sentiment in the human mind as that of veneration for superior virtue, or talents; no kindly feeling of one fellow-being for another, that he should require a man to be called a lord, and to possess privileges of which he is denied a share, before he can properly respect him? If you come to the other sex, is there not beauty, virtue, the natural desire to please, and the universal passion of love to ensure them due tenderness and consideration, without their being called ladies? So far indeed as I am acquainted with the countries where these distinctions of ranks prevail, that respect which the sacred institution of marriage requires from man to woman, and from woman to man, is not the most striking feature in the character of the higher ranks."

"But really now, Colonel Dangerfield, you have travelled, and seen the world; do you think it possible to introduce equality into England, without overturning every thing venerable and sacred there?"

"I don't know exactly what you mean, Mr. Barham, by every thing venerable and sacred. If you mean abuses that have grown sacred by long proscription; follies consecrated by time, and institutions that have become venerable, like ruined edifices, because they no longer answer the end of their creation; if you refer to these, I don't believe that they can or will sur-

vive the adoption of a single feature in the system of equality. I admit the difficulty and danger of abolishing the distinction of ranks in countries where it has long prevailed; where every step and stage in life is graduated by the ladder of precedence; and where the people, from education and long habit, have lost all other criterion of respect or reverence, but that of mere rank and title. Here, however, in this country it is quite different; habit and education have prepared them to estimate other claims; and though they may still retain some vestiges of the ancient delusion in respect to these things, there is nothing on the face of the earth which they would so soon resist as a person who should come and demand as a right any privilege or precedence, merely on the score of his title."

"Very well, very well, sir, but you will yet live to see the futility of these notions, that all men are equally wise, equally virtuous, equally brave; and that therefore they must of necessity be made equally rich, equally honourable, and equal in all respects to their rulers."

"Why do you not add, equally tall, equally fat, equally strong, and equally active?" asked the colonel, smiling at this absurd view of equality, which is either ignorantly or wilfully made to represent the rational system of this country. "My dear sir, our policy is not founded on the complete overthrow, but the establishment of the system of Providence, which hath ordained that there shall ever subsist a difference in the activity and capacity of mankind, as well as in the opportunity, and the re-

sults of their exercise. Everybody knows that it is impossible to regulate the consequences of all these, and that one will be wiser, richer, and happier than another, in spite of all laws to make them equal; and in defiance of all efforts to regulate their course of action. Such is not our absurd system of equality, which consists simply in an equality of social and civil rights, granted and guarantied by the laws, over which we ourselves have a control, each in his primitive character of a citizen, a portion of the government. There is not here, as in many, I may say in all parts of the Old World, one law for the king, another for the noble; one law for the noble, another for the commoner; one law for the freeholder, another for the copyholder; one law for the bishop, another for his curate. No, sir; all the people are peers to each other; peers of the Republic; and you might as well assert that because every member of your House of Lords is the peer of the others, that, therefore, they must all be equally wise, rich, and noble; that there can be no distinction between them; that the idiot lawgiver must be held everywhere, and at all times equal to the wisest; the poorest as rich as the Marquis of Stafford; and that among the nobles of England nothing but beastly familiarity and rank vulgarism can possibly prevail in their intercourse with each other."

Mr. Barham discovered some little impatience at this long harangue. He himself spoke very quick, like a majority of his countrymen of the same class; while the colonel, like most Americans, delivered himself with great deliberation.

The worthy Englishman had never been at Washington to learn patience by attending the debates in Congress; he yawned more than once before he replied,—

"Well, you have made out a pretty strong case. I think I could match it with a stronger if there were time. You will excuse me, Colonel Dangerfield, if I ask permission to retire; but I cannot, I fear, excuse myself to this lady for being accessory to keeping her listening so long. Good night. I must be up betimes in the morning, and will take my leave now; for I have arranged to meet the steamboat at New Madrid. I must be in New Orleans in a week, at New York in a fortnight after, and in England a month after that, or I shall lose my chance of killing the first pheasant in the good county of Kent. So good night, good night, and thanks for your lecture and your hospitality."

Thus they parted, and thus endeth the chapter of equality. We feel, however, bound in honour to apprize the curious reader that Mrs. Judith Paddock never discovered whether the curls of the stranger were natural or "everlasting," and he must be content to remain in condign ignorance for the time to come. For we grieve to say, it appears by the latest accounts that Mr. Barham not long since lost his breath on the Manchester railroad in an attempt to travel at the rate of sixty miles an hour, and never recovered it again.

CHAPTER XII.

The best man of the village, and other matters.

NOTHING worthy of being handed down to posterity occurred in the village of Dangerfield-ville until the expiration of some three weeks, when Master Zeno Paddock received a packet franked by the honourable Leonard Dangerfield, and containing a printed copy of his maiden speech in the House of Assembly. In the United States, and more especially in the west, making a speech is considered equivalent to gaining a great victory by sea or land. It constitutes an era in the life of a young man, and with great reason; for in a free community, where there are no standing armies of any kind, either soldiers or police, sufficient to enforce obedience, the power of persuasion is the supreme power, and he who best wields it the true monarch. The next day the Western Sun rose in all its glory; it contained an account of the great debate on the subject of the small ward collector's malversations, which not only involved many important constitutional principles, but incidentally affected the liberties of the people, and not only the people, but all their posterity.

On this great question, according to the Western Sun, "the honourable Mr. Stapvital spoke four hours, with an eloquence never surpassed

in this or any other age; the honourable Mr. Flamgudgeon followed on the other side, in a speech of six hours, replete with argument and profound investigation; he was answered by the honourable Mr. Doddipol, who was on his legs (or, as Zeno unfortunately had it, *knees*) upwards of eight hours, and electrified the house by a display of oratory which Cicero might have envied, and Tully strove in vain to equal. The honourable Mr. Flapdowdle took the floor on the other side; and in a speech of three days presented a bird's eye view of the state of Europe, from the decline and fall of the Roman empire to the decline and fall of Napoleon. This occupied the first day. On the second he talked about railroads, canals, internal (or, as Zeno had it, *infernal*) improvements, the public lands, state rights, and the tariff; and on the third he discussed the subject of matters and things in general. It was a most powerful effort of eloquence. The speaker was observed several times to hang down his head, as if overpowered by the weight of argument; several of the members nodded assent on various occasions; and many serious accidents happened to the little children, whose mothers and nurses were so fascinated by Mr. Flapdowdle's eloquence, that they forgot to go home and take care of their domestic affairs. But when the honourable Mr. Dangerfield arose, you might hear the grass grow in the fields, there was such a deathlike silence. He commenced by a solemn exordium," &c. &c. Here followed the speech, which, indeed, was one that did the young man great honour, and was only ren-

dered almost ridiculous by the absurd praises of Master Zeno Paddock, who manufactured a whole column of fustian on the occasion.

On the adjournment of the legislature, which happened immediately after the great debate concerning the delinquency of the small ward collector, Leonard Dangerfield returned home, where he was received with affectionate pride by his family, and with enthusiasm by the people of the village, who decreed him the ovation of a barbecue. The young man was struck with the change which a few weeks had made in the looks of his sister, and, above all, in her deportment and temper. She was deadly pale, and the charming roundness of her figure, which had been fostered by the pure springs and pure air of the Kentucky uplands, had given place to a meager form, all lassitude and weakness. The alteration had not struck the parents, who saw her every day; but when Leonard pointed it out to them, their fears were greatly excited. A consultation was held, which ended in a plan for a little family tour and voyage on the Mississippi, which, it was hoped, might give a new direction to her feelings, by the change and variety of objects it would offer to her contemplation. Virginia gave a listless assent, and the thing was presently arranged. The great Pompey, who grew grayer and younger every day, and the little Pompey, now a greater man than his ancestor, were to accompany them. But Mr. Littlejohn, after divers expressive yawns, decided, that as they would want an active person to look round and take

care of matters and things about the place, he would stay at home.

It was now the early autumn, when our travellers set forth on horseback to strike some point of the Mississippi, whence they might embark in one of the steamboats which now began to ply regularly between St. Louis and New Orleans. Their object in this land journey was to give Virginia the benefit of the exercise it afforded. In the short period that had intervened since Colonel Dangerfield sought the wilderness,—such are the rapid changes which the genius of freedom, the parent of courage, energy, and generous enterprise, produces in these regions—roads had been made in various directions, and little towns, destined in the imagination of the founders one day to become the mart of half the New World, had risen, or at least had been "laid out," as the phrase is, wherever a favourable situation presented itself. Yet still, occasional parts of the ride were through primeval forests, the growth of the virgin earth, whose unexhausted energies produced all the wonders of spontaneous vegetation. If it should peradventure ever happen to our book to be read by persons unacquainted with the energies which seem to be here communicated from the soil to its lords, they will doubtless marvel at the phenomenon of a young and delicate girl and an elderly matron thus travelling after the manner of the lady-errants of yore, on ambling palfrey, through unpeopled solitudes. But we assure them nothing is, or was a few years ago, more common; and we ourselves were once acquainted with a little fair-haired, blue-eyed western

damsel that looked as delicate as a snowdrop, who used to accompany her father, a senator of the United States, to the seat of government, and return with him (a distance of more than seven hundred miles), on horseback.

In due time our travellers reached a little town on the banks of the Mississippi—that mighty river, with a name almost as long as its interminable course—just in the nick of time to get on board a steamboat on her way upwards. As the vessel steered out from the shore into the rash and boiling stream, whose force appeared as if it might baffle all the powers physical and intellectual of that sturdy little emmet yclept man, it was sublime to see how at first she trembled on being struck by the current, and stood still, as if to collect her energies for the great encounter of all that was consummate in art with all that was tremendous in nature. At first, it seemed doubtful which would gain the victory, until, by degrees, the boat began to ascend faster and faster, and dashed forward with a triumphant vigour, which seemed to proclaim that the power of art was irresistible. No one, indeed, can behold the change which these vessels are now silently bringing about in the great region of the west, and resist the conclusion that the genius of Fulton, whom the ungenerous rivalry of England has sought to rob of the glory of having consummated this noble invention, has laid the foundation of greater and more rapid changes in the New World than the genius of Napoleon did in the Old.

The novelty of this mode of conveyance, and the beauty of the scenery, which, after passing

some distance up the river, opened before them, gradually awakened Virginia from that feeling of lassitude and hopeless indifference which had by degrees usurped the dominion of her once active, energetic mind. The long rich "bottom" called *Bois Brulé*, which by the learned Thebans of the broad-horns has been done into English under the name of "Bob Ruly;" the Cornice Rock, forming a regular massive wall of perpendicular strata, and exhibiting all the appearance of a long castellated rampart; the High Tower, rearing itself out of the bosom of the swift current in lonely grandeur; the far-famed "Sycamore-root," that spot infamous in the logbooks of Mississippi navigators for the wreck of many a stately broad-horn; the darting of the boat across the river, from the swift adverse current to the favourable eddy; the manœuvring to avoid the snags and sawyers, names of dangerous import; and a thousand other novelties, all rapidly succeeding each other, restored a temporary spring and cheerfulness of heart, to which for some time she had been a stranger.

When tired of the river, they went ashore at the little towns on its banks, and stopped for another boat, until finally they reached St. Louis, which, standing near the point of junction of two of the greatest rivers of the earth, aspires with the claim of legitimacy to a future eminence, of which the people seem to think they can form no sufficient idea. Here all that was old was French, and all that was new American. It is the land of saints; St. Charles, St. Louis, St. Genevieve, St. Francis, and many

more; and the crosses of the churches mark the abodes of the ancient faith. The residence of the Frenchman was more picturesque in the distance; its mud walls, neatly whitewashed, appeared beautiful in the midst of rich meadows, or on the borders of prairies adorned with harvests of flowers, casting forth the perfumes of a hundred Arabies. The Yankee, on the contrary, follows his own fashion; and as it seems the destiny of that revolutionary race to change every thing wheresoever they go, our travellers could easily detect the commencement of the wonders they achieve in their incessant wanderings.

It is curious to reflect on the odd confusion of names to be found in this and every other portion of the United States. The early settlers seem to have put in requisition the four quarters of the world. St. Francis and Perry, St. Charles and Monroe, St. Louis and Madison, St. Genevieve and Jefferson, Hannibal and Potosi, Belle Fontaine and Herculaneum, New Madrid and Tywapatia, Palmyra and Bluffton, Caledonia and Kaskaskias, Tiber and Waconda, Pinkney and Grenville, Columbia and Cote sans Dessein, not forgetting the Big Black Fork of Little White River, and a thousand more, all form a portion of the body politic of the state of Missouri, and all lie peaceably together side by side. Some owe their existence here to the attachments of men who came from far distant countries; some to religious feelings; some to classical recollections; some to a patriotic attachment to distinguished names; some to vanity; and some to caprice. The whole com-

bination marks the association of people coming from distant regions of the earth, and here perpetuating, as far as possible, the country of their fathers or the place of their nativity. The names of a few of the great rivers may, perhaps, serve to keep alive the recollection of the first lords of the soil long after every other memorial has passed away

One of the most novel as well as enchanting scenes in nature is the prairie, or delta, extending to a distance of many miles between the two great rivers. It is for a considerable portion of the year one sea of flowers, one wide region of fragrance; and its features differ from those of any other lands in any other country. Not a tree is to be seen except upon its outer edge, and the blue horizon meets it everywhere, forming a long straight line, without the least appearance of irregularity or undulation. As you cast your eye over it, it is all one series of deceptions. Sometimes, owing to a particular state of the atmosphere, or the position of the sun, distances and objects are increased or diminished like the vagaries of the phantasmagoria; things that are near will appear as if at a great distance, and those at a distance at other times seem as if you could almost touch them. Now a bird will seem as if touching the sky with its head, and anon the herds appear like an assemblage of insects. One day it was proposed to Virginia to make an excursion to St. Charles, and visit at the same time the Mamelles, as the French have aptly called them,—a succession of fine regular bluffs of great height, and commanding a full view of the beautiful

scenery in the vicinity, after which they were to return to a little old picturesque French village, there to sojourn awhile if they should find comfortable accommodations. They passed a delightful morning in rambling among the endless variety of flowers, or on the summits of the Mamelles, whence they could distinguish the two vast streams which here unite in a spot worthy of them both. Nothing could be more beautiful to the eye, nothing more ennobling to the imagination, which carried them to the distance of thousands of miles, to the remote and almost unknown, unvisited regions whence they receive their first tribute from some nameless spring in some nameless mountain recess or hidden forest. After banqueting on the scene till almost satiated with its redundant beauties, they rode over to the French village, where they found tolerable accommodations at the house of a little old Frenchman, like all his gallant nation, good-humoured, polite, and devoted to the ladies.

But he did not like the Yankees, by which term he designated the Americans in general. They had begun terrible inroads upon the old customs of the village, and to make the dust of antiquity, which had been quietly gathering there for two centuries, fly at a great rate. "They are commencing their pestilential improvements," said he, "and one has nothing to do now but to work all day to be only as comfortable as we used to be without working at all. When I first came here, one had only to apply to the governor, and he gave him as much land as he could cultivate, without slaving him-

self to death, for the price of a small fee to his secretary. Now Congress makes everybody pay for it, and in a little while the Yankees make it worth so much that it is enough to ruin a man to buy it. In fact, they increase the price of every thing, and I myself have been obliged to descend to the honour of entertaining the ladies at my house, in order to keep up with the march of improvement, as they call it. Diable, monsieur! the Yankees are so busy, they have no time to go to church except on Sunday, and instead of hearing the bells ring so charmingly from morning to night, as they used to do here when the people had nothing to do but pray and dance, parbleu! these heretics eat fish, I believe, every day when they can get them, except in Lent. Ah! monsieur, the old French regime—the old Spanish regime much more charming. Ah! so easy, so—what you call?—ah! yes, so lazy as the Yankees say. No gentleman, no noblesse, no aristocracy now. Eh bien! never mind — can't be helped. Malbrook son—" and he skipped off, humming the old French air with right good will.

Having performed his vocation, whatever it was, he returned, just as a tall, raw-boned, athletic fellow was standing opposite the window of the hotel, pronouncing himself to be half horse, half alligator, and a little of the snapping-turtle; and affirming, with a few original oaths peculiar to this latitude, that he could whip his weight in wild cats, there being no back out in him or any of his breed. He was all the way from Roaring River, and had once rode through a crab-apple orchard on a flash of

lightning, besides performing several other remarkable feats too tedious to mention.

"Pray, monsieur, who is that valiant person?" asked Colonel Dangerfield.

"Ah! that is the best man in the village. Diable! under the French and Spanish regime, the good priest was the best man; now this half horse, half alligator is the best. Voilà, monsieur! he goes about, he challenges everybody, he whips everybody, and then, diable! he calls himself the best man in the village! Hey, begar! this is one way of being good, I think. 'Tis what they call one Yankee notion, I suppose."

The best man in the village was, in fact, a sort of George-a-Green, a Pinder of Wakefield, the champion of the community, the glass of fashion, the director of public opinion among his fellow-boatmen, and a sort of privileged outlaw who played all sorts of pranks with a prescriptive impunity originating in that involuntary respect which is everywhere paid among the common people to strength and courage combined. Yet he was not ill-natured nor blood-thirsty, but was actuated by a false taste rather than a bad heart. Such men mark the existence of a state of society in which the physical and pugnacious qualities predominate over the intellectual; and their disappearance, like that of the buffalo and beaver, is a sure sign that civilization is at hand. In the van of life, where every step and every station is beset with dangers from the wild beast and the wild man, courage is the quality of all others most in request; and it is not to be wondered

at if the disposition to do battle should become chronic, and subsist long after the necessity has ceased. The best man of the village would have been a treasure surrounded by dangers; he was little better than a nuisance in a civilized community.

CHAPTER XIII.

A philosopher in rags.

The little village in which our travellers sojourned, was one of those old establishments which seem destined never to grow any larger. It was inhabited by a mild, amiable race—the descendants of the early French emigrants, of whose character it is sufficient to say that they were the only people that ever gained the affections and confidence of the wild aboriginal race of North America. It was a primitive Catholic settlement; and whether it is owing to the number of saints' days and holydays in this ancient and venerable code, or from any other cause, we have heard it observed, that in the old countries the people of this persuasion are, in general, not so active and industrious as those of many others. Perhaps the vast number of charitable institutions connected with this church in almost every country, and the custom of distributing alms, or food, on particular days, to all comers, by relieving the poor from the necessity of exertion, may contribute not a little to the effect which we have noticed. There was a little church, the bell of which seemed never quiet, and the only busy man in the village was the bell-ringer. Other than this, there was little or nothing to disturb the repose of the good people,

who had long lived, and might have long lived in contented simplicity, had not the transfer of the vast region of Louisiana, the only empire ever acquired without the expense of a drop of blood, paved the way for the intrusion of those "cochon Yankees," as the old French landlord called them in his sleeve, who straightway began, as usual, to turn every thing upside down. By their pestilent activity they rendered it absolutely necessary that everybody should be as stirring as themselves, in order to keep pace with the progress of the new comers; for though an indolent community may do very well by itself, the moment it comes in contact or in rivalry with one that is active and industrious, it must go the way of all flesh, or accommodate itself to the circumstances of the times, and exert all its energies to prevent falling far in the rear of the rest of the world.

"Ah! monsieur," said the landlord, an old remnant of the ancient régime: "Ah! monsieur, the Yankee are one great people, but then she always so busy, busy, busy, morning, noon, and night. Diable! she don't give himselves time to say their prayers, I think. She come here among us, and she must ave new road: very well, the road is make at last. Eh bien! then she must ave a canal right long side of him, and everybody must give money for him. Very good, then we shall ave new streets, a new court-house, a new market, and a new church. So she come round for more money for that. Then she goes on, busy, busy, busy, never satisfied, more work, more money, and all for the dem publique good. Diable! I

wonder what the publique ever do for me that I shall work for him if he was the king himself? Well, monsieur, we ave got new road, new canal, new court-house, new market, and new church; and now I say to myself, ha, hah! I think she must ave satisfaccion at last. Phew! no such thing; she must ave town meeting to choose the police; then she must ave town meeting to choose the legislator; then she must ave town meeting to send the president and his bureau all to le diable, for something I don't know. Eh bien! all this done, I say ha hah! I shall dance and sing now a leetle. Phew! Morbleu, no such thing. Next time all this to do over again. The government machine out of order, she say, and must set it right again. So we go, year after year, making the grande improvement, and mending the government; and we Frenchmen, bongre, malgre, must do every thing de haute lutte, when we had much rather do nothing at all. Peste! that I shall be condemned to live in one dem country, always in want of improvement, under a government that always want mending. What you call? Ah! the dem self-government more trouble than she is worth, I think. For my part, monsieur, I like somebody shall take it off my hands, and let me dance a leetle some time. Voilá! yonder comes one great politician, one grand tariff man, as she call himself."

Such was the harangue of mine host to Leonard Dangerfield, as they sat on the little piazza of the hotel in social chit-chat during the absence of the rest of the family, who had taken a walk to see the ancient church, which

was now open, and the bell ringing, as usual, most musically melancholy. The interruption was occasioned by the approach of one of those wandering vagabonds not unfrequently seen haunting the precincts of village taverns. He came up, and planting his stick on the ground, crossed his arms in rest, and remained looking at them in silence, as if waiting to be noticed. At first Leonard took him for one of those pestilent outlaws who, having wasted their substance at the tavern, ever afterwards assume the privilege of hanging about the doors, and abusing the landlord for not trusting them, now that their money is all spent. If wars answer any good purpose, it is doubtless in ridding the country of these worthless excrescences, who seldom fail to get swept off by recruiting parties in their progress through the villages. They hardly ever return, being excellent food for powder; and if spared by arms, generally fall victims to their former vices in the end.

His dress displayed innumerable incongruities, being composed, or rather decomposed, of the remnants of many fragments of finery, preposterously disposed about his person. His coat had been once military, the rusty buttons bearing the vestiges of our national symbols, the soaring eagle and the thirteen stars; his waistcoat was of embroidered satin, with old-fashioned flaps, such as might have once appertained to a player; his trousers of home-spun tow linen, and his shoes, but of these little remained, for his wanderings had left his feet almost bare. On his head he wore an old cocked hat, ornamented by a wreath of ever-

greens and faded flowers, and something like a star of tin was fastened on the breast of his coat. The landlord accounted for his military costume by the circumstance of his having exchanged his former clothes with a worthless discharged soldier, who had cheated him. The features of the peripatetic, though haggard, squalid, dirty, and almost hidden by an enormous bushy beard, still wore the remains of an aspect of some interest; and his black eyes, though sunk deep in his head, sparkled with a restless animation, indicating an active or a troubled mind.

The worthy host affected to take no notice of the intruder, and continued to discuss the various subjects of war, commerce, agriculture, manufactures, matters which every man within the limits of these United States understands, at least as well as the mother that bore him. They were, however, interrupted from time to time by the man of rags, who, without raising his chin from his crossed arms, or his arms from his stick, now and then made a strange random observation, as he seemed to catch and comprehend a portion of the conversation between Leonard and mine host. Thus, on hearing the words domestic manufactures, he chuckled forth an odd dry laugh, and pointing to his trousers, exclaimed, in a hoarse hollow voice, which indicated that he was labouring under a severe cold,—

"Look! I am a great advocate for domestic manufactures; a black spider spun and wove these; they were stitched with the needle of a compass that pointed nine ways from Sunday.

Don't you see every stitch squints a different way?"

Just then a mosquito settled on his hand, which he caught, and squeezing the blood out of his body—

"Good! mosquitoes are your true insect soldiers; they live by blood. Huzza! boys, I shall conquer the whole nation one of these odd-come-shorts, and make every gallinipper a field-marshal."

Then, approaching nearer, he asked the landlord, "if he could tell him the reason why cats washed their hands with their tongues, and ran after their tails." On his replying in the negative, the ragged Theban exclaimed most contemptuously—

"Tut! then go and twist your gray beard into a rope, and hang yourself on a sugar-cane, as I mean to do as soon as mine grows long enough. You see I am nursing it, daddy. I sleep all night in the fields with my face up to the moon; they say it turns fish rotten, and men's brains upside down; but I don't believe a word of it, or I should have been mad long ago, instead of being a philosopher. But what was I saying? O! I sleep with my face turned up to the moon: they say it's made of green cheese, but I doubt that, for it would have been about my ears long ago in a shower of skippers. You'd be surprised at the queer things I see up in the stars there, sometimes, when every one is asleep; some think they govern men, but for my part I go by the moon when it shines, and when it goes down I strike fire with two Irish potatoes, and study philosophy till my eyes turn

into dark lanterns, and will-of-the-wisp leads me into the mire. He was a blind dancing-master once."

"Don't pester the gentleman with your nonsense, but go about your business; go to sleep, that is the best thing you can do."

"Sleep! Landlord, did you ever see a goose stand sentry on one leg, to keep itself awake? that is your true reason: a philosopher must have a reason for every thing. Do you know why a goose always stands on her left, and a gander on his right leg?"

"Diable! not I," answered mine host, petulantly.

"Then how dare you talk to a philosopher, most ignorant publican, and justly classed with sinners? I saw *your* fate in Mercury last night; you'll be hanged for feloniously robbing a cask of your own whiskey, and filling it up with water."

"I believe you've got too much whiskey in your head; you are in love with whiskey I'm afraid," said the other.

"Love! What do such pieces of old worm-eaten parchment as you know of love? I was in love once myself before I turned astronomer, and was bubbled by the moon out of the sixpenny worth of wits my father left me for an inheritance." He put his hand to his forehead, as if to recall something.

"I have it. I remember it was the year behind the flood, before the grass grew, or swallows built their nests in young men's whiskers, or cows fed in the churchyards, or sextons laughed in their sleeves when other people

were crying. I forget her name—I forget her name, though it used to be music to me. But it's no great matter now; for if we had married, I should certainly have killed her with kindness, and then I should have howled for it. They said I should marry her when I lost my wits; but I valued them too highly, and stuck to them like death to an old negro. —But, would you think it? she fell in love with a wig-block in a barber's window, and left me, because, as I afterwards heard, the story went I lost my wits in searching out a way to be married without losing my soul for it. But here is the whole story in black and white. I wrote it one night in the churchyard. Read it, read it; it will make you laugh ready to split your sides. You can give it me again in the churchyard, where I walk every clear night, and study the lying epitaphs. It makes me laugh—ha, ha, ha! it makes me laugh to think how easy it is to be a good man on a tombstone!" Saying this, he handed an old soiled paper to Leonard, who had been musing in painful perplexity at his disjointed chat, and went away as merry as madness could make him.

As Leonard Dangerfield listened to the wanderings of the poor itinerant, and scanned more attentively his appearance and manner, he felt a vague, dreamy sort of impression that somewhere, and at some time or other, he had seen him before. He fancied he could perceive something about him indicating that he was one who had seen better days. It is difficult to define what it was, but, in the language of romance, it was that mysterious something of

which neither rags, poverty, nor desolation of heart can strip a being whose mind has once been embellished with the graces of intellectual refinement. He held the paper in his hand while he questioned the landlord, who informed him that the poor creature had first made his appearance in the village about a fortnight before, pretty much in the state he was now. He seemed perfectly harmless, and found little difficulty in obtaining of the charitable a sufficiency to supply the necessities of hunger. He had either forgotten his name, or designedly kept it a secret; for he would not disclose either that or the place whence he came. He never accepted of a bed for the night; but when the weather was fair slept, as he said, at the sign of the moon and seven stars; and when it was foul, he would not tell where. As the landlord finished these details, Dangerfield accidentally turned his eye on the paper which he had continued to hold in his hand. He started, and uttered an exclamation of painful surprise; for it was an old letter in his own handwriting, directed to Dudley Rainsford, and which he had written him on receiving the information of his having saved the life of Virginia.

"Good God!" exclaimed he; "can it be possible that I should not have known him!"

"Known whom?" asked the landlord, inquisitively.

The question brought him to his recollection, and mine host being called away, he was left a few moments alone to consider of the course to be pursued in this delicate emergency. The

result was a determination to keep the matter a secret from Virginia, while he sought an interview with the wandering beggar, whom he contemplated placing in some asylum where he would be kindly treated, and where his sister might never have an opportunity of having her feelings harrowed up by witnessing his miserable plight. He had scarcely settled this in his mind when the party returned. Virginia seemed in better spirits than she had been for a long time; she described the incidents of their walk, the church, the altar, the pious pictures painted by artists more remarkable for their orthodoxy than their skill, and the various little peculiarities that so strikingly mark the difference between the forms of the Catholic and those of the religion in which she had been brought up, with a degree of spirit and vivacity which caused her parents to exchange glances of encouraging sympathy. But the anxiety of Leonard prevented his partaking in these newly-awakened hopes; for he felt a presentiment that there was in store for the poor girl a trial more severe than any she had yet endured. Virginia noticed this, and rallied him, but ineffectually. He took the earliest opportunity to walk out in search of the wandering mendicant. But he was nowhere to be found, and he returned with a determination to urge their departure early in the morning. His plan was to forget his pocket-book, or something of value, that might furnish a pretext for his returning immediately and resuming his search for Rainsford, which he resolved to prosecute until all hope of discovery was lost.

CHAPTER XIV.

A criticism on epitaphs.

Though it was now hazy autumn, yet the air in this mild climate was quite genial at times, and the calm silence of the night in this orderly little village invited to contemplation as well as repose. The chamber of Virginia looked into the churchyard of the little ancient edifice, where reposed the ashes of the generations that had passed away. The region of the narrow house was marked by those expressive little hillocks whose ominous size and shape give token of the uses to which they are appropriated. Nature, as if abhorring the very idea of extinction, seldom, if ever, forms any thing like a grave; and go where we will, in the churchyard, the forest, or the field, we can tell almost instinctively the spot where repose the last remnants of mortality from all others. Most of the graves were marked by a white cross, the emblem of an ancient and respectable faith; and a few distinguished by tombstones of snowy marble, standing like sheeted ghosts of dignity and distinction amid the lowly plebeian race around them, affording significant indications that pride as well as hope looks beyond the grave. The little gray church, unspoiled by paint, had an air of dignity derived from its antique form and simple plain-

ness, which well harmonized with the pious ends to which it had been so long consecrated. It called not up ideas of pride, or wealth, or arrogance, but of primitive simplicity, dignified poverty, and lowly humility, which better, far better than all the vulgar trappings of decoration, all the titles of ecclesiastical aristocracy, accord with the vocation of those whose highest, most endearing title is that of a shepherd, whose most dignified employment that of tending their flocks.

The night had been some time on the track of morning as Virginia sat contemplating the scene before her, and occasionally soaring into the regions of the past or the future, as memory or imagination took the reins. The waning moon, "like sky-hung Indian bow," was fast sinking towards the western horizon, and the long shadows began to be more and more indistinct. Beyond the church she had a full view of the river, across which a single line of light threw its long narrow radiance, looking like a silver bridge athwart some fabled tide, for the nymphs and river-gods to enact their nightly sports, or bask in the rays of the regent of the starry empire.

Presently her attention was attracted by the appearance of a figure bounding from the little porch of the church, and bending its steps among the quiet people; now stopping as if to read the inscriptions; now hurrying from one to another, and anon throwing itself full length on a grave. The moon now sank behind the Mamelles, and in the starry light she could not distinguish whether it was man or woman;

but that it was something human she was sure, for the indistinct murmurings of a human voice fell faintly on her ear at intervals. After remaining quiet on the bed of death, it started up on a sudden, and seemed to be employed in digging with its hands. Virginia was happily ignorant of the refinements of a highly-cultivated state of society, one of the indications of which is the existence of a race of wretches who violate the sanctity of the tomb, and bring about an untimely resurrection of those sacred remains which savages revere, and none but Christians violate. Yet still she shuddered with a vague horror at the midnight occupation of the figure, which, after continuing awhile apparently scratching up the earth, all of a sudden ceased, on hearing the faint sound of oars proceeding from a boat coming down the river, and sought concealment in the place from whence it had emerged. Curiosity retained her at the window some time longer, but, seeing it did not return, she sought her pillow; and it was not till the first crowing of the cock that the gentle visitant of night poured the blessing of oblivion on her pillow.

She arose in the morning pale and languid, and answered the inquiries of her friends by relating what she had seen during the night. Various were the conjectures of the parents, but Leonard said nothing. He had his suspicions, but wisely kept them to himself, as every discreet man should. The honest landlord, however, soon set them all to rights. It was a ghost, which had appeared at about the same

hour for ten or twelve nights in succession, to the great consternation of the village.

"But Father Jacques will be here to-morrow," said he, "and soon settle his business."

"Why don't you set a watch, and find out who or what it is?" asked Colonel Dangerfield.

"Why, monsieur, we did; but somehow or other, just before the time it generally comes they all got so sleepy they couldn't keep their eyes open; and as they couldn't well watch with them shut, you know, monsieur, they thought they might as well go home and sleep quietly in their beds."

"A very judicious decision, certainly. But didn't the Yankee curiosity induce some of them to see it out?"

"O no, monsieur; the Yankees don't believe in any thing, I think. They doubt the divine right of the king and the infallibility of the pope. Diable! I was wrong; they do believe in roads, canals, and the blessings of liberty."

The appearance of the ghost made Leonard Dangerfield more anxious than ever to leave the village, and he pressed it with such earnestness, that Virginia could not help asking,—

"Why, Leonard, what has come over you? I never saw you in a fidget before. I do believe you are frightened at the prospect of a visit from the ghost."

"Perhaps I am," said he, with a sad sort of smile.

"Well, for my part, I have not seen a place since we left home I like so well as this little, odd, old-fashioned village; it is so quiet and so idle, that I feel infected with a delightful incli-

nation to stay here and do nothing all the rest of my life."

But Leonard urged their departure so strenuously, and gave so many good reasons that were good for nothing, that it was at length settled to leave the village immediately after breakfast. Accordingly, after receiving the compliments of mine host, who declared to Mrs. Dangerfield he was much puzzled to tell the mother from the daughter; and to Virginia, laying his hand on his heart, that he was in despair at her going; they set out on their return to St. Louis. Immediately on their arrival, Leonard discovered the loss of his pocket-book, and declared the necessity of returning to look for it. Virginia laughed, which she had seldom done of late.

"Well, I declare I'm almost glad of it. Never let me hear you again scold me for dropping a handkerchief, or tell me to my face that one quarter of my life has been spent in looking for lost keys. If you do, I shall certainly quote the incident of the pocket-book. Shall I lend you some money to pay your expenses? Poor man!"

"Some young men would be willing to lose their pocket-books for such a smile as that," said Leonard, gayly.

This speech turned the current of her thoughts into their accustomed channel, and checked her vivacity in a moment. She thought of who it was that once valued her smiles, and soon became lost in a labyrinth of doubts and anxieties as to what had become of him. The stream that has been diverted from its course by arti-

ficial means returns with accelerated force to its wonted channel, carrying all before it, and deepening its bed.

Leonard Dangerfield lost no time in returning to the village, where he found his pocket-book without difficulty, but did not find poor Rainsford, who, except when compelled by hunger, never appeared; for it seemed he had some secret haunt which no one had discovered, or indeed thought worth seeking. His hopes now rested on the night, and he stationed himself at a window which commanded a view of the churchyard, with a resolution to watch as long as he could keep himself awake. It was after midnight, and the silence of death reigned in the village, when he saw something moving about among the tombstones and graves with little white crosses. Determined at once to satisfy his doubts as to the nature of this mystery, he sallied forth and cautiously entered the churchyard, where, shrouded among the high grass he at length discovered the object of his search, lying with his face upwards, as he had described himself in his interview with the landlord.

"Rainsford! Rainsford!" said Leonard, in a gentle tone.

"Whose ghost are you?" exclaimed he, bounding on his feet; "if you're a lawyer, here's your fee; if a doctor, you must demand it of the good folks hereabouts. You'll find all your patients here."

"Don't talk so madly, Rainsford; you know who I am well enough."

"Yes, I know you; you're the preacher that

gave me such a knock on the head with his Bible that I had nothing but texts in it for a month. But you needn't come here, for these people never subscribe to build churches, or print tracts. Let the old worm-eaten trunks alone, can't you."

"Come with me, Rainsford, come into the house and they will give you a comfortable bed, come."

"Pooh! don't you see I am digging my grave? when I've done it I shall come and bury myself slyly, for fear of the doctors. You must know, old black coat, this is consecrated ground, and your true orthodox worm won't eat a heretic. So I shall be safe enough, like a mole, if I only once get under ground."

"Rainsford, dear Rainsford! come with me."

"How often must I tell you my name is not Rainsford? that is the name of a race that all ran mad. Now I, sir, Mr. Snortgrace I mean, I am as much in my senses as the man in the moon himself. Come, come, sit down here, and we'll have a talk; a little piece of secret biography, for there's nobody to blab here."

He drew Leonard towards a grave, who, being determined to humour him, sat down by his side.

"Yes, here, here—no, here on this grave—there's one below that broke his mother's heart, and yet he escaped hanging, and got an excellent epitaph. I wonder if the worms have any stomach for such rascals. Just here is another pretty boy that was hanged for murder, yet they gave him a public funeral, and made a saint of him afterwards. And here's a pre-

cious fellow, who went about begging money for a poor widow, and then pocketed the whole on pretence that her dead husband owed him money. Yet he got a funeral sermon, and was buried with the honours of war."

Leonard again urged him to go into the house, for the morning air was becoming raw and cold, and the white fogs were rising lazily from the river, with fever and agues on their wings.

"What!" cried he, "are you afraid of your precious bones? My bones are of steel, and my heart is flint, and so when I feel cold I've nothing to do but strike fire with them and warm myself. Don't you think that an economical way of making fire, old Snortgrace? I'll not stir a peg; go to bed yourself, if you had rather sleep than talk reason. If you'd only stay I'd tell you why one star is bigger than another. I am in jolly company, and see how gloriously my drawing-room is lighted. No wonder your ghosts of any taste love to walk by moonlight."

Just then a cloud darkened the low waning moon.

"Ay, ay, my lady! you may well hide your face. I'll swear there is something villanous going on in the world just now; and you turn your back, like a watchman, that you may pretend not to see it. Some plunderer is abroad; adultery and seduction is going on somewhere; or else—yes, that must be it; some murderer is lifting his knife to send some one to kingdom-come before his time. I'll tell you what, Snortgrace, if there is any part of

the day that is irretrievably d—d, it must be from midnight to daylight."

Here he fumbled about very busily for a few moments, paying no attention to the persuasions and remonstrances of Dangerfield.

"I wish I could find it."

"What?" said the other.

"It is erected to the glorious memory of a fellow that cheated his orphan sisters out of fifty thousand dollars, and tried to cheat heaven by making it an accomplice, and building a church with part of the money. It would surprise you to read what a good man he was for all that; he built this church with part of his sisters' portion. They lie somewhere yonder, without a memorial; but I've an idea they don't howl quite so musically as some folks. See! the business is done," continued he, as the moon emerged from the cloud; "there's some poor damsel the worse for the last half hour; or what's just as likely, there's hot blood smoking on some knife that will be used to cut bread with next Sunday."

Leonard was becoming chilled with cold, and impatient withal at this rambling folly, and asked him,

"Will you go home with me, for the last time?"

"No, I scorn to accept bed or board from any man. I am a fellow of clear estate, and pay my way as I go. I owe nobody a shilling, and here I mean to sleep till doomsday, which is the day before to-morrow, according to last years' almanac—hic jacet—look here—here I am,"

and he threw himself, or rather sunk down on the ground: "Here, between two capital fellows; on one side is a lawyer, who never exerted himself but in a bad cause; and on the other a client, who was ruined by gaining a lawsuit. Worshipful company! Good night, Snortgrace, I must to my studies, now I think of it, and not lie idle here. There's a learned mouse discussing the folios, yonder; I must go and assist him, for some passages are a little too hard for his teeth. Good day, good day, old Snortgrace."

He attempted to rise, but the stiffness occasioned by the chill of the night, added to the exhaustion of his frame by abstinence the whole day, and violent declamations during the preceding interview, had so worn him out that he sunk down again, and became perfectly silent. On attempting to raise him, Dangerfield found his limbs were entirely relaxed, and that he had become insensible. He exerted his strength, lifted his light emaciated body from the ground, and bore him into the house, where he laid him on his own bed, and roused the landlord to his assistance. By degrees he recovered his animation, but his pulse was high, his skin burnt like fire, and a physician being sent for in the morning, pronounced him in a high fever.

CHAPTER XV.

Showing how one enemy drives away another.

The situation of Rainsford caused great perplexity to Leonard Dangerfield. He could not think of leaving him until all was decided, and his stay would occasion anxiety to his family, unless he accounted for his absence. How to do this he did not know; and in the mean time the patient grew worse. The delirium of fever seemed to have superseded the derangement under which he had previously laboured; and his incoherent talk assumed a new character and direction. His exclamations were rather plaintive than otherwise, and his wild wanderings seemed to have finally settled down into one leading impression, that of a lover deserted by his faithless mistress. Leonard had caused him to undergo a lustration, and clothed him decently from the wardrobe of the worthy landlord, who good naturedly acquiesced, while he shrugged his shoulders, and looked his wonder that so much care should be taken of a mad beggar.

The second day of Rainsford's illness Leonard was most disagreeably surprised by the arrival of the rest of the party, who came to see what had become of him.

"We thought you had lost yourself instead of finding your pocket-book," said Virginia,

gayly. "But what under the sun keeps you here, Leonard? and why did you not write or send?"

Leonard was taken by surprise; he had no excuse or explanation ready; and his hesitation appeared so plain, that like a discreet sister she looked her wonder, and said nothing. What a pity Mrs. Judith Paddock had not been there to profit by her example!

The young man took the earliest opportunity of apprizing his parents of the discovery and situation of Rainsford; and various were the plans proposed and rejected for the purpose of getting Virginia away from this dangerous vicinity without exciting her suspicions. But while this consultation was going on, accident had saved them the trouble of devising schemes of concealment. Virginia having been certified that the room she had formerly occupied was vacant, and in the situation she left it, had retired thither with her waiting-maid, a little ebony damsel, of whose attendance we have hitherto said nothing, presuming it was not necessary to advertise the reader that our heroine had actually such an appendage. While sitting there, her attention was caught by a voice in the next room, which made her start and shudder. It was one she imagined familiar to her ear, dear, still dear to her heart, and it uttered strange incoherent rhapsodies that bespoke a disordered mind. She listened again, but all was silent; and she imagined herself mistaken. But again its incoherent ravings, or rather moanings, met her ear so distinctly, that she could no longer doubt.

"Hark! what dat? who dat, missee?" cried the maid, fearfully.

Virginia did not answer; an irresistible impulse came over her; she started up, rushed to the place whence the voice proceeded; and, careless at this moment of all considerations but one, opened the door, and entered the sick man's room. The quick ear of affection had recognised the voice, and the quick eye of affection at the first glance distinguished the altered features of the poor wanderer. But he did not know her. He lay on his back on the pillow, with his eyes glaring upwards on vacancy, and his lips moving as if unconsciously, sometimes uttering disjointed talk, at others without producing any sounds save low, inarticulate whispers. Virginia neither shrieked, nor wept, nor fainted; she stood like an image of despair gazing on the flushed face, glazed eye, and haggard features of the poor invalid, without uttering a word, or stirring a finger. At length, he seemed to notice her, and, waving his hand, said, in his usual plaintive voice,—

"Go away, go away; I don't want to have any thing more to say to you. What's your name? ah! old Virginia. I was willing to lose my soul for your sake, and you repaid me by breaking my heart. Go away; there's no use in plaguing me any more."

"Rainsford—Dudley Rainsford—don't you know me?" at length she said, in a voice which might have cast out seven raging fiends.

"O yes, I know you of old; once I might have loved such a deceitful face and sweet voice, but I hate all women now; they have

been the plague of my life. One of them brought me into the world to be miserable, and another sent me out of it howling."

Virginia covered her face and wept; for the sound of his voice seemed to unlock the springs of grief that before were closed.

"Ay, ay, you may well weep; but what does that signify? The rain is of no use in the desert where nothing will grow; and I have heard of a cruel, deceitful animal—I forget its name, but I believe it's woman—that always sheds tears when it is going to tear its victim to pieces. Yes, yes, yes—" and here he began again his low, indistinct, disjointed cogitations.

This painful scene was interrupted by the entrance of Mrs. Dangerfield, who had gone into Virginia's room, and, not finding her there, sought her where she was to be found. Without uttering a word to disturb the invalid, she took her hand, looked in her face with an eye of anxious, affectionate authority, and led her out of the room, without being observed by Rainsford.

The moment they were in private the mother besought, nay, commanded the daughter to accompany her immediately to St. Louis, and spare herself the unnecessary pain of being present, or so near him, at the period now fast approaching when Rainsford's sufferings were about to be brought to a close. She could be of no service, and would only be laying up recollections that would for ever blast her happiness and destroy the repose she might yet attain. The physician, she stated, had already

pronounced his doom; all human aid was vain, and he must die.

"Then let me stay here and pray for him, dear mother," said Virginia.

"You can do that as effectually absent as present."

"But why cannot I wait on him, sit by his bedside, and see that nothing, nothing that human care, that human aid, that affection and gratitude can perform to sooth his last hours, is wanting?"

"My dear daughter, recollect you are not Mr. Rainsford's wife."

"True, mother; but if not here, we shall be united hereafter. I know the forms of the world forbid such things; but here, in this remote region, among strangers whom I shall never see again, and who will never see me; in the presence of you, my father, and Leonard, if sanctioned by your consent, who shall dare to say that in such a situation, and under such circumstances, I should do wrong to obey the impulse of my heart and my reason? Mother, dear mother, I *must* see him, I must be with him when he dies."

"Good heavens! Virginia, why?"

"I have heard that when Providence takes to itself an immortal soul, just when the light is to be extinguished for ever in this world, the reason, which has been obscured or shattered by sickness and suffering, is almost always restored for a little while before the final separation. I must be with him then. I conjure you, as you value my peace, my life, to let me be with him then, that he may know I did not

desert him in his last hour, and forgive, and call me once more his dear Virginia. The recollection of that will be something to dwell upon, and I shall remember him, not as a wayward, wandering maniac, but a kind, rational, dear friend, whose last look recognised, whose last word blessed me. Wilt thou oblige me, dear mother?"

"Your weak state of health and tenderness of heart, my daughter, will sink under such a trial. I dare not trust you."

"Mother, none better know than you, for your own life has proved it so, that neither strength, nor youth, nor nerves, nor sinews, nor even Samson himself, though he bore the city gates upon his shoulders, is half so strong, so enduring as true affection. The weakest woman, animated by this, can encounter fatigues, loss of rest, absence of food, yes, every privation of life, with a faith and perseverance to which men can never arrive. For her husband or her offspring she is invincible so long as hope is kept alive in her heart."

"But what hope can you have, my daughter? The doctor says there is nothing to hope."

"Nothing from the doctor; but there is a greater than he, and we know not yet *his* decision. Mother, hear me! I know not how, or when, or whence it came, but I have a conviction—no, not a conviction, but a hope, which almost approaches it—that the crisis is close at hand, and that this fever is destined to produce a great change in the mind of poor Rainsford. It may be folly, it may be fanaticism; but I feel as if *I* could save him, and I alone. My

cares, my affection, my ever-watchful superintendence, aided by the blessing of Heaven, shall yet restore him to his better self, and make him, what he was intended to be, a bright example of genius and virtue."

"But if at last you are disappointed?"

"If so, so be it. If after doing all I can, and fulfilling what I consider a solemn duty dear to my reason and my affection for him who not only saved my life, but who would have devoted his own life to me had it been permitted; should it please Heaven that I am disappointed at last, you shall then see me bear myself as becomes the daughter of such a mother. My conscience will then be at peace, and I have read that we can bear up against any feeling but that of remorse."

"My noble girl!" cried Mrs. Dangerfield, clasping Virginia in her arms, "you shall be gratified. I too will watch, all of us will watch by turns or together; and may the hope you cherish be prophetic!"

From this period the character of Virginia assumed an almost sublime elevation, such as is always the result of the steady, rational, persevering pursuit of one great object. A serene, unchanging, solemn self-possession governed every moment of her life, and no one ever heard her sigh, or saw her weep, or falter for a moment in her attentions to Rainsford. When she did not sit by the bedside of the sufferer, she was ever near, hovering over him like a ministering spirit, watching the expression of his eye, the changes of his countenance, the motions of his muscles, his breathing, and follow-

ing with intense interest the wanderings of his mind, to discover if any ray of reason broke forth from the dark chaos of confusion. The father and brother, though they did not exactly approve her devotedness, could not help admiring and lending their aid to this course of persevering gratitude and affection; but they were utterly hopeless of its consequences. The physician had given it as his opinion that the condition both of his mind and body previous to the fever precluded all rational hope of Rainsford's recovery. He shook his head more significantly every time he came, and repeated his assurances that the crisis of the disease would be followed by immediate dissolution.

The usual state of the young man was that of quiet as to bodily exertion, while his mind seemed perpetually rambling, as appeared by the motion of his lips and occasional mutterings. But he neither raved, nor required force to restrain him; and there was no apprehension of any violence in his conduct. Thus several anxious days passed away, accompanied by increasing weakness on the part of Rainsford, and decreasing hope on the part of his friends.

"He cannot live," said the mother; "he is wasting away every hour. Be prepared, my dear Virginia."

"I am prepared, yet still I hope," replied the daughter.

On the fifteenth day, or rather night, for it was far in the night, it happened that Virginia was sitting in the sick man's room, with no other companion than an old French nurse,

who was now fast asleep in her chair. She was, as usual, anxiously watching his every look and motion, when all at once his low murmurings, which day and night had continued without intermission, ceased, and a dead, awful silence, like that of the grave, succeeded. Virginia snatched a light, and held it over his face. His eyes were closed, and his countenance was that of deathlike repose—of death itself—pale, sunken, and motionless. She took his emaciated hand; it was moist, and the pulse still beat its low alarum. He was asleep, not dead. "The hour is come!" thought Virginia; and, seating herself again, watched, as a mother watches the bed of her last and only offspring when wearied nature, worn out with sickness and pain, seeks a temporary reprieve in the arms of sleep. For a considerable period he neither stirred, nor spoke, nor breathed to the listening ear of Virginia; and often in the dead silence that reigned all around, within and without, in the heavens and the earth, the conviction came over her that now he must be dead. But the unerring witness, the pulse, that still continued its motion, told that the tide of life was yet on its way to the ocean of eternity.

As thus she sat, fearing that every beat would be the last, she felt a tremulous motion in his fingers, his hand was drawn towards his head, a sigh heaved from his breast, and he opened his eyes. They did not glare as wont, but gradually moved around the room, and rested at last on the face of Virginia. He contemplated it for a moment, passed his hand over his

eyes, and uttered, in a low, whispering, weak voice,—

"I thought I saw Virginia, but she's gone."

He looked again wistfully in her face, while she remained motionless, scarcely breathing, scarcely able to breathe, for the conflicting feelings which now rushed on her heart almost choked her.

"Virginia," said he at length, "is it you?"

"Blessed be Providence! he knows me," said the soul of Virginia; but she could not answer.

"I thought so; it is nothing; a dream—or"—here he closed his eyes again, and sunk into another deathlike sleep which lasted an hour or more. Again he awoke as before, and again he saw the same white vision bending over him.

"Virginia," whispered he, for his strength admitted of no more, "is it you, or am I again cheated with a dream or a shadow?"

"It is I," replied the young maiden, scarcely knowing whether she ought to answer him or not.

He tried to raise himself on his elbow to look at her, but his strength failed him, and he again sunk into a doze.

The day was now dawning; the watchful nurse, who usually slept on her post, like many others, for it is the anxiety of affection alone that can keep the eyes wide open night after night, now awoke; and Virginia, motioning her towards where she sat, whispered her to go and summon the physician, who had requested to be called, in the event of any change in his patient. He came while Rainsford was still asleep, and Virginia expressed in a whisper her

hope that this disposition to repose was the forerunner of recovery.

"My dear young lady, never believe it," replied he in the same tone; "it is the precursor of the last sleep; indeed it is doubtful whether he will ever wake. But if he does it will be but for a few hours, and then—"

"Cannot you do something for him, doctor?"

"Nothing; all human aid is vain. It is useless for me to attend here any more. I can do nothing for him. There—he's gone now—his pulse is stopped—no—there it is again—one—two—three—but it's all in vain—let him die in peace—I can do nothing more—good morning." And he departed without ceremony.

"Then I will try," thought Virginia, who remembered having heard many instances of persons recovering after having been given over by the doctors. Nature, indeed, seems often to do wonders when left to herself; or it may be that Providence interposes in these cases sometimes, to remind us how idle is all dependence on the presumptuous ignorance of man.

He had scarcely gone when Colonel Dangerfield appeared at the door, accompanied by a venerable old man. Virginia motioned them not to enter, and went softly out to apprize them of the state of the patient, and the decision of the doctor.

"Will you permit me to see him?" said the old man, in a French accent. "My profession is rather the cure of souls than of bodies; but the nature of my calling, and the vicissitudes of my life have made it necessary that I should

know something of both. At any rate, he will, I presume, if he awakes at all, awake in the possession of his reason. In that case I may pray with him, if I can do nothing more."

"I feel grateful for your kindness, but this young gentleman is not a Catholic."

"Well, never mind," said Father Jacques, as he was called; "we may pray together for all that. Though we may differ in some things, there are others of a thousand times greater consequence, in which we all agree. I am a native of France, but have lived long in this mild and tolerant land, and have not been scourged into bigotry by persecution, or seduced into it by the power of persecuting others. I, at least, cannot do him harm, and may be of service. Permit me to see him, I entreat you. There is no other clergyman in this part of the country."

The good man received the permission, and entered the room where Rainsford was now lying, awake, and in possession of his senses, but so weak that he held on life but by a single hair. Though he had spoken lightly of his skill, Father Jacques had the benefit of general learning, aided by long experience as a missionary among white men and red men; and was indeed far superior to many professed and practising physicians. He saw at once that all that was to be combated now was weakness of body and mind. The disease had left them both free from every thing but that. He prescribed various little remedies for the purpose of keeping the spark alive, until nature had time to rally and resume her functions.

For some days it was a struggle between life and death, time and eternity; and during that period it is not too much to say that he owed his life to the perpetual, the intense cares of Virginia. She never left him; she it was that poured the restoratives of the good Father Jacques, drop by drop, into his mouth; she it was that marked every movement indicating pain or uneasiness; she it was that placed his pillow, or his head; and she it was that, raising herself above the petty affectations that spoil the gentlest of all beings, woman, shrunk from nothing which she thought might conduce to his ease or administer to his recovery. He sometimes attempted to speak to her, to thank her—but she stopped him at once, by declaring that if he persisted she would leave him. But though he spoke not, his eye followed her wherever she went, and his heart was almost bursting with gratitude and love.

As he continued to gather strength, Virginia gradually began to absent herself, or only to visit his chamber in company with her mother. He reproached her for it, and almost wished he were dying again, that he might have more of her society. Relieved in some measure from her intense anxiety, she took an opportunity of inquiring of Leonard the particulars of the discovery of Rainsford. He spared her the relation of the most affecting and revolting part, and contented himself with merely stating that he came there in a high fever and delirium, no one knew from whence. During the progress of his recovery, which was slow and lingering, the good Father Jacques, who had been let into

his history by the family of Dangerfield, came to see him almost every day, conversing with him on the subject of mental maladies, without intimating his knowledge that it could have any particular application to him. He mingled a rational philosophy with a rational religion; took frequent occasion to warn him against the indulgence of a belief in presentiments, which added to actual misfortunes all the miseries of anticipation, without enabling us to avoid or mitigate them; and above all against the spirit of fanaticism, the fruitful source of mental horrors unutterable. The force of calm, dispassionate reason, and unaffected piety, combined, is almost irresistible. Father Jacques neither puzzled him with metaphysics, nor disputed points of faith, but dwelt on topics of practical philosophy, and practical religion, such as all rational beings can comprehend. The difference between this rational old man, and the fiery-headed preacher of the terrors of the bottomless pit was, that the one goaded the apprehensive nervous being to madness, the other soothed him into a firm reliance in the mercies of the Supreme Being.

The good priest saw with honest pleasure the effect produced on the mind of his patient by the course he was pursuing, and was delighted—for there was that about the mind and manners of Rainsford which conciliated and attracted almost all with whom he associated—to discover that he had no distinct recollection of any thing that occurred, from the time of his first derangement to the period of his restoration. He had a vague idea of having lost the

consciousness of some portion of his existence; but Father Jacques insensibly led him into the belief that this was nothing more than the effect of the delirium, which was itself the consequence of his fever. Thus he remained, happily unaware of the incidents of the few last months; and the recollection of the fate of his family, together with the weight of the dreadful presentiment of his own, yielded in a great degree to the reasonings of the good and wise old man, aided by the hope, and almost the belief, that he had now fulfilled his destiny, by his temporary alienation of mind. The period which his fears had always rested upon, as that in which the evil was to come upon him, was now rapidly passing away, and he felt every day more confident. The fact is, his mind was now getting into a healthful state, and life, and all that constitutes its ingredients, began to assume an aspect entirely different from that which they had presented for years past. The fever, and its consequent treatment, had not only entirely broken the habitual concatenation of his ideas, but created, as it were, a new physical man, with new feelings, thoughts, recollections, and anticipations. Still there was at times a certain dreamy consciousness, an indistinct perception, which is as difficult to analyze as to describe, and which prevented his ever making any inquiries into the circumstances or the reasons of his being where he was, when he first came to his recollection.

CHAPTER XVI.

Touching the march of improvement, and the distinction between law and conscience.

When Rainsford was sufficiently recovered, they began to make arrangements for returning to Dangerfieldville. Some anxiety was felt lest the sight of accustomed objects might revive old associations, and renew old feelings in his mind; but it was finally determined that, as in all probability, his fate and that of Virginia were now inseparably united, it was best at once to put his newly acquired state of mind to this test, preparatory to their marriage. Accordingly they took leave of the good Father Jacques, with every expression of gratitude; and Rainsford, especially, regretted that he had no mode of testifying his sense of the obligations he had conferred upon him.

"I shall be satisfied," said the other, "if you will only bear in mind, for the future, that religion is not hatred, but love; and that it was intended to make mankind friends, not enemies."

Having taken leave of the old man, the landlord was summoned to receive his money, and their thanks, for in reality he had conducted himself with uniform courtesy and attention. He came in a most formidable passion, scolding

in tolerable French, and pretty bad English. The colonel inquired the cause.

"Diable! monsieur, another improvement; last year they assess me for one grand public improvement! one road to go somewhere, I don't know. Eh bien! I pay the money. Well, this year they assess me for one other grand public improvement—very grand—voilá, monsieur, one other road, right longside the other, both going to the same place. Diable! I no want to travel on two turnpike roads. Ah! monsieur le colonel, I shall be very rich, O! very rich indeed, by these grand improvements. They take away all my land to make room for the grand improvement; they take away all my money to pay for him, and then they tell me my land worth four, six time so much as before. Peste! what that to me when my land all gone to the dem public improvement, hey? I shall be very rich then. Diable! I wish myself gone to some country where every thing was go backwards—what you call tail foremost, instead of forwards, for the dem march of improvement shall ruin me at last."

When Colonel Dangerfield paid his bill he looked at the money with a rueful countenance, and exclaimed, with a shrug of pious resignation,—

"Eh bien! never mind, make very good road and canal. Morbleu! I shall wonder what they want of these road and canal. Voilà, monsieur! yonder one dem big river, she come two, three thousand mile that way. Eh bien! Voila, monsieur! yonder one t'other dem big river, she come two three thousand mile that

way. Diable! is not this long way enough to travel, without the dem public improvement. Ah! we shall be in ruins soon."

The colonel condoled with the little old man of the old regime, and expressed a hope that times would mend when all the public improvements were finished.

"Eh bien!" replied he; "yes, times will mend when there is nothing else to mend, I think. Monsieur, there is my neighbour, Jan Petit, live right over the way, yonder. Twenty year ago he very rich; he ave every thing comfortable; he fiddle, he dance, he laugh, sing, gallant the demoiselles; no care, no trouble, no dem work at all. He ave one leetle house, one leetle garden, and raise plenty radishes and sallad; he live like leetle king. Eh bien! by-and-by Yankee come; public improvement march this way. Phew! off goes Jan Petit; they cut a street right through his garden; dig up his radishes; pull down his house, and then make him pay for taking away his house, his garden, and his radishes! Voila, monsieur, she ave sometime one, yes, two dozen cambric—what you call? chemise—two dozen, very fine. Well, he now but one left in the world, and that ruin him."

"How so?" asked Colonel Dangerfield, highly amused at the droll complaints of mine host.

"Voilà, monsieur! he pay one laundress by the piece, and begar! he chemise ave so many pieces now, he pay for two dozen every time he is washed. This is one grand consequence of the grand system of the grand internal improvement, as they call him. Morbleu! under

the old regime internal improvement mean improvement of the inside, the head, the comprehension, the understanding; now she mean to dig the grand ditch, to make the grand road, and the grand canal right alongside the grand river. Begar! the river no use now, I think. Ah! monsieur, suppose you had only lived under the old regime; den I shall smoke my pipe, sing, dance, go to church twice every day; no trouble, no improvement, no dem paper money. But the Yankee come, and now a man must do zomezing, or he shall soon ave but one chemise, and be ruined by his laundress like Jan Petit. Ah! monsieur, suppose I one young man. I shall come ome to the old countries, where every thing stand still or go backwards, and be so happy. Ah! 'tis so easy, so charming to go down the ill 'stead of up!"

All things being ready, the colonel left mine host in the midst of his perplexities, and the party turned their faces towards home. Nothing occurred during the journey worthy of record, save that on his arrival at St. Louis Rainsford ordered a suit of rich damask pulpit furniture to be sent to the church over which Father Jacques presided. The good man was delighted with the present, and such was the exultation of his heart as he contemplated the splendours of his little pulpit, that he often prayed to be preserved from the assaults of pride and the seductions of worldly vanity.

As they proceeded on their journey, the heart of Virginia expanded with delighted gratitude, at marking the healthful vigour which the mind of Rainsford was every day acquiring.

He seemed to look on the world and every thing in it in a new and animated point of view. Every object of nature appeared to administer to his happiness; and if in contemplating the majesty or beauty of the scenery along the great river he sometimes soared into the regions of imagination, it was with a steady flight, like that of the eagle. A perfect connexion and continuity of ideas marked every thing he said, and it was evident that reason had resumed the reins, in all probability never again to resign them.

It was one of the strongest proofs that fate had at length relented in her persecutions of Rainsford, that on the very morning of the day in which the family of Colonel Dangerfield arrived at home, Master Zeno Paddock and his wife Mrs. Judith departed from the village never to return. Such was the reputation of the proprietor of the Western Sun, and such the extraordinary capacity he had exhibited in the matter of criticism, and, most especially of all, in setting the village together by the ears, that a distinguished speculator, who was going to found a great city at the junction of Big Dry and Little Dry Rivers, made him the most advantageous offers to come and establish himself there, and puff the embryo bantling into existence as fast as possible. He offered him a whole square next to that where the college, the court-house, the church, the library, the athenæum, and all the public buildings were situated. Master Zeno swallowed the square at one mouthful, and Mrs. Judith was utterly delighted to remove to such a fine place, where there

must be so many new secrets to come at. Truth obliges us to say, that on his arrival at the city of New Pekin, as it was called, he found it covered with a forest of trees, each of which would take a man half a day to walk round; and that on discovering the square in which all the public buildings were situated, he found, to his no small astonishment, on the very spot where the court-house stood on the map, a flock of wild turkeys gobbling like so many lawyers, and two or three white-headed owls sitting on the high trees listening with most commendable gravity. Zeno was marvellously disappointed, but the founder of New Pekin swore that it was destined to be the great mart of the West, to cut out St. Louis, Cincinnati, and New Orleans, and to realize the most glorious speculation that was ever conceived by the sagacity or believed by the faith of man. Whereupon Zeno set himself down, began to print his paper in a great hollow sycamore, and to live on anticipation, as many great speculators had done before him. Poor Mrs. Judith was bitterly disappointed in the splendours and magnitude of the city. She never got possession of but one secret, and, as fate would have it, there was not a single gossip within forty miles to tell it to. Whereupon, in a fit of despair she went and whispered it to the air on a certain spot on the bank of Big Dry River, whence in good time there sprung up a grove of little poplars that did nothing but whisper and wag their leaves if but a zephyr blew. At length, this worthy woman died of an intermitting fever, in consequence of

a great overflow of Big Dry River, and her last words were, "I shall get at the secret now!"

The absence of these two incendiaries from Dangerfieldville was a great blessing to Rainsford and Virginia, since it relieved them from the plague of two pestilent busybodies always prying into the affairs of others, and always betraying them the first opportunity. Great was the joy of Mr. Littlejohn at the return of the family, and great the exultation with which he detailed the vast improvements he had made during their absence; how he had grafted six apple-trees, planted a whole row of parsnips, weeded nearly one-half of a bed of salad in a single morning, pulled up a great thistle that grew in the lawn with his own hand, and caught a catfish that weighed thirty-six pounds and a half. This, it seems, crowned the series of his glorious exploits, for we cannot find that he did any thing worthy of record from that time until the arrival of the colonel. Truth obliges us to confess that many of the chairs bore shrewd testimony that the old habit of reclining on three at a time had not been neglected by Mr. Littlejohn.

The Black Warrior and Bushfield were not wanting in their duty, but came to see the colonel as soon as they heard of his arrival.

"Little squaw no look so white now as when she go away," said the warrior.

Virginia blushed a little, and looked at somebody.

"Well, colonel," said Bushfield, "I've let go the willows at last. I can't go it any longer here."

"Why, what's the matter?" asked the other.

"O, every thing is getting so dense here, that a man can't turn round, or say his soul is his own. There's that interloper that has *located* himself just under my nose, about five miles off, I caught him in the very fact of shooting a deer on my side of the river, I'll be goy blamed if I didn't, colonel. Well, what would you have a man do? I challenged him to take a shot at from a hundred yards to meeting muzzles. But he's as mean as *gar*-broth. He said he'd bought the land of Uncle Sam, and had as good a right to shoot there as the old man himself. This was more than a dead *'possum* could stand. I wish I may be shot if I didn't lick him as slick as a whistle in less than no time. Well, by George!—would you believe it?—he took the law of me! Only think of the feller's impudence, colonel, to take the law of a gentleman! I paid him fifty dollars for licking him; but if I don't give him a hundred dollars' worth the next time we meet, I'm a coward, anyhow."

The colonel condoled with him, but at the same time advised him to submit to the laws.

"Laws! none of your laws for me, colonel. I can't live where there's law or lawyers, and a feller don't know whether he's right or wrong without looking into a law-book. They don't seem to know any more about conscience than I do about law. Now, for my part, I do just what I think right, and that's what I call going according to my conscience. But colonel," continued he, with a queer chuckle, "I've got into a worse scrape than that business with the squatter."

"No! I'm sorry for that; what is it?"

"Why, you must know, not long after you went away there came a man riding along here that I calculate had just thrown off his moccasins, with another feller behind him in a laced hat, and for all the world dressed like a militia officer. Well, I hailed him in here, for you know I like to do as you would in your own house; and he came-to like a good feller. But the captain, as I took him to be, hung fire, and staid out with the horses. So I went and took hold of him like a snapping-turtle, and says I, 'Captain, one would think you had never been inside of a gentleman's house before.' But he held back like all wrath, and wouldn't take any thing. So says I, 'Stranger, I'm a peaceable man anyhow, but maybe you don't know what it is to insult a feller by sneaking away from his hospitality here in Old Kentuck.' I held on to him all the while, or he'd have gone off like one of these plaguy precussion-locks that have just come into fashion. 'Captain,' says I, 'here's your health, and may you live to be a general.' 'Captain!' says the other, 'he's no captain; he's my servant.' 'What!' says I, 'one white man be a servant to another! make a nigger of himself! come, that's too bad!' and I began to feel a little savage. I asked one if he wasn't ashamed to make a slave of a fellercretur, and the other if he wasn't ashamed to make a nigger of himself; and they got rather obstropolous. I don't know exactly how it came about, but we got into a fight, and I lick'd them both, but not till they got outside the door, for I wouldn't be uncivil anyhow. Well, what do

you think? instead of settling the thing like a gentleman, the feller that had a white man for his nigger, instead of coming out fine, I'll be eternally dern'd if he didn't send a constable after me. Well, I made short work of it, and lick'd him too, anyhow. But I can't stand it here any longer. Poor old Snowball slipped her bridle the other day, and went out like a flash in the pan; so I'm my own master again, with nobody to stand in my way at all. I must look out for some place where a man can live independent, where there's no law but gentlemen's law, and no niggers but black ones. I sha'n't see you again, colonel, it's most likely, so good-by all. I expect you'll be after me soon, for I look upon it to be impossible for a man in his senses to live here much longer, to be hoppled like a horse, and not go where he pleases." And away he marched, with a heart as light as a feather, in search of a place where he might live according to his conscience.

CHAPTER XVII.

A secret which Mrs. Judith would have given her ears to hear.

Another autumn had now arrived with all its mellow beauties, and the hazy Indian summer threw its soft obscurity over the land, giving to distant objects the tints of an early twilight, and to those more near all the effect of distance. The flowers were all gone, but the rich and varied tints of the woods supplied their places; and though the air was not so genial as that of the laughing, jolly springtime, it possessed an even, sober temperature, that without relaxing the frame, disposed to exercise and activity. Rainsford was now restored to perfect health of mind and body, and Virginia to the sober certainty of happiness. The colonel and Mrs. Dangerfield felt their confidence in the permanency of his recovery every day increasing, and no longer opposed the union of the lovers, who were soon to be united for ever. Their hours passed cheeringly away in the enjoyment of the society of each other, either within doors or in rambles by the river-side. The first time they visited the spot where the demon of fanaticism had tempted him so sorely, Rainsford shuddered at the recollection of that hour. He remembered as a horrid dream his feelings and his purpose at that time, and he

remembered now more deeply, more profoundly, more touchingly than ever what he owed to the kind being he had once devoted to destruction. His heart overflowed with gratitude and tenderness; he looked at her with his soul in his eyes; and it was not so much the touching beauty of her face, the perfection of her form, nor all the harmony of female loveliness he saw before him that occupied his mind, as the idea of the faithful, gentle maiden, who had under so many circumstances of discouragement consented to trust her happiness to his care, and contributed so materially to make him capable of guarding so sacred a deposite. The fulness of his heart overpowered him, and he dropped his head on her shoulder.

Virginia was startled with the apprehension that the sight of old scenes had recalled some of those feelings and apprehensions which she had hoped were now banished for ever from his mind. She asked him fearfully what was the cause of his emotions, and hinted at her suspicions.

"It does, indeed," said he, mournfully, and raising his head, "it does, indeed, remind me of what I would give all the world but you, Virginia, to forget. But you shall know all. You shall know the risk you once encountered from me; but which, I have full faith in Heaven, will never be encountered again. But you shall know all—I will have no secrets from thee, Virginia. Before you give yourself to me for ever, it is proper, it is my sacred duty to disclose what I have intended, as well as what I have done. My honour demands it of me."

He then detailed the turn given to his mind, already almost overborne with the presentiment which had poisoned so great a portion of his cup of existence, by the fiery fanatic who had preached in the village the year preceding. He painted the struggles of his feelings; the final adoption of his determination; the time and manner in which he so nearly completed his purpose; and his final abandonment, after a contest which brought on the fever, that, owing to the blessings of her fostering care, had terminated in his restoration to happiness. We have before observed, that Rainsford had lost all recollection of the period which elapsed between his first derangement and his recovery.

"Now, Virginia, you know all, and here, on the spot where you first pledged yourself to be mine, do I now give you full liberty to withdraw it. I love you with an affection made up of every ingredient that can enter into the composition of love; true, lasting, and unwavering love. I will, if after this you dare trust me, devote myself, my time, my talents, my very soul, to your happiness. Whatever you wish me to be, that will I be. If retirement, and domestic occupations be your wish, so shall it be. If honour, if ambition allure you, I feel I have that within me can make me whatsoever I strive to become; and you shall see me, if I live, take any place wherever you point your finger. Now, Virginia, once more my fate is in your hands—decide, and for ever. Dare you trust me after this?"

"As I did before it; as I shall for ever after

it," said Virginia, firmly, and without hesitation.

Rainsford clasped her, for the first time, in his arms, and called her by every name dear to the heart of woman.

"I have not broken my oath," said he, releasing her, "for I can now look back upon the past, and forward to the future, with a confident hope, a settled conviction that I have fulfilled my destiny; I have a presentiment, dearest Virginia."

"Ah! Rainsford, beware of presentiments. If they are ever prophetic, it is that they contribute, like prophecies, to their own fulfilment. I am convinced that the true source of various maladies of mind and body, is in the predisposition given by a presentiment that they will surely happen."

"True—most certain—where did you become so wise," said Rainsford, smiling.

"Have I not a wise and virtuous mother?" was the sensible reply. "But now that you have told your secret, I will tell you mine."

"Yours? you secrets too? Beware, or I shall take you for another Mrs. Judith Paddock."

"Yes, I; I knew of the intention you have just disclosed, at the time."

"You? you?" cried he, in astonishment. "You knew it?"

"Yes, Rainsford; you thought I was looking at the evening star, when you held the weapon over me. But I saw it."

"And neither shrieked, nor fled nor fainted at the time; nor hated me afterwards! O, Vir-

ginia, may Heaven bless thee! But how, how was it possible?"

"You forget," said she, modestly, "who, and what I am; I call myself a daughter of Old Kentucky. You forget that when we first came hither, danger walked like the pestilence, in daylight and in darkness, through these forests; that we never laid down at night without the expectation that before morning we should be roused by the yell of death; that we never, for years, could calculate an hour on the possession of life; and that I, yes, Rainsford, I and my dear mother, have more than once stood by our husband and father, when the savages were approaching to set fire to our house, loading the guns that he and his people were discharging at the painted warriors. You forget that we had become familiar with death, and that the spot on which we stand is part of that region called the 'dark and bloody ground.' Are you not afraid I shall shoot you one of these days?" added she, playfully.

"No, by Heaven! I am only afraid I shall always, when I approach you, feel as the fox did when he came into the presence of the lion."

"O yes! I thank you. But don't you remember how soon the fox got over this?"

"Well, well, my sweetest, best Virginia, though I may not fear, I hope you will allow me to worship you?"

"O, by all means, provided you won't treat me as the worshippers of idols sometimes do their wooden divinities, when they don't grant their unreasonable desires."

The horn, which it was customary to blow,

for the purpose of summoning the labourers to dinner, now echoed far and wide, reminding them of the progress of the time, and they turned towards home with lighter steps and lighter hearts than they had known for many a day.

On a certain Christmas eve, Virginia, having completed her twentieth year, which put her in possession, as Rainsford now learned for the first time, of a handsome fortune, left her by an aunt, when but a year old, resigned to his care a heart worth all the jewels of the Persian diadem, a person lovely and pure as the first flower of spring. We will not describe her dress, or that of the bridegroom, for we fear they were both deplorably deficient in fashion and material. We have heard confidentially that the costume of the bride contained no more than twelve yards of muslin, which the milliners, whom we consider the highest authority, assure us, is one-third less than appertains to a reasonable woman, meaning a woman of reasonable dimensions. As for master Dudley Rainsford, he had no whiskers, and that is quite enough to consign him to utter oblivion in the ranks of fashion. There was neither waltz nor gallopade danced on the occasion, but of all the happy faces and white teeth ever exhibited in this new world those that peeped into the doors, and eke the windows too, of Colonel Dangerfield, were the happiest and the whitest. There stood Pompey Ducklegs the Great, who still lives, and if it is in our power to make him, shall live for ever, whose masticators still held out in all their glorious array

of ivory, amid the ruins of time; and there stood Pompey the Little; and by his side the gentle dusky Venus, yclept Cora, waiting-maid to the beauteous bride, partaking in her dignity, and as it were, a portion of the wedding itself; and here, and there, and everywhere, peeped forth faces that shone like lumps of anthracite coal, or well-blacked boots, all with eyes dancing out of their heads; and all with hearts gladdened at the happy wedding of young missee. And well might they love her, for she was kind to them all.

It was a great day for the great Pompey Ducklegs, that last remnant of the Old Virginia aristocracy. He bustled and bragged away about old times, and after telling the young fry about his travels to St. Louis, and all that, concluded by solemnly giving it as his opinion, "that after all there was nothing like Old Phiginny, Icod! she never tire, I say dat for she." Pompey the Little (it was at supper where the ebony race crowded as much enjoyment in an hour as other people do in a whole winter of dissipation) Pompey the Little, however affirmed, that for his part he thought young Miss Phiginny worth a dozen of Old Phiginny. Whereupon the great Ducklegs corrected himself, and magnanimously acceded to the amendment, at the same time asserting the dignity of age, by reminding the young "racksal," how he disgraced his family, by losing the great race of Barebones against lady Molly Magpie. These merry varlets kept up the rout and revelry in the kitchen, hours after that period in the history of lovers which all dis-

creet authors have agreed to leave to the imagination of their readers.

"Why is marriage like death?" said Caroline Lilliwhite to Rodolph, Count of Sweighausenbergenstein.

"Because," said the count, "all romances end with one or the other."

In deference to such high authority as the count, who has the finest crop of whiskers in town, and reads Goëthe, we shall here close our tale, which, the reader is assured, we could with perfect ease carry through two more volumes, if necessary. But we cannot part with some of our old acquaintance for ever without a passing notice and farewell.

Mr. Ulysses Littlejohn is, or was a few years ago, one of the oldest, and, if not one of the wisest, certainly one of the happiest old men in all "Old Kentuck." That lucky indifference to the little rubs and crosses of life, which is a better shield than the hide of Achilles or the presumptuous affectation of philosophy, preserves him even from the pettishness of age and infirmity. There is, moreover, a sort of easy, old-shoe character about him that fits everybody and pinches nobody. Even his growing infirmities have not spoiled his temper, and he is wont to felicitate himself on the indolent habits of his life, which, now that he is unable to take exercise, relieve him from the impatience of idleness and inactivity. One day, old Pompey, who still flourishes his duck legs in immortal youth, was condoling with him on not being as active as himself.

"Ah! Massa Leetlejohn, what pity you no

such leg as mine! Aristocracy always have good leg."

"Pomp," replied Ulysses, "I wouldn't have such a pair of legs as yours for a gift; why, they're just the shape of a gourd. I was reckoned once to have the handsomest leg in all Prince William."

"Eh! once 'pon a time worst time in the world. Once 'pon a time catch massa one of dese days."

"Well, let him, Pomp; I won't run away."

"No, ecod; I tink massa no run from Old Death himself."

Mrs. Judith Paddock—but she's dead, rest her soul! we killed her off some time ago. But Master Zeno still lives in the anticipation that New Pekin will yet fulfil its glorious destiny. He has, indeed, strong reasons to anticipate the speedy arrival of this great consummation; for though not above ten years have elapsed since the foundation of this illustrious city, it did at one time actually contain three log houses. True it is, they were swept away one day by an inundation, and floated down Big Dry River in great style, until they were arrested and converted into pigsties. But their having once been built is a good omen; and Master Zeno is, or was not many years since, keeping an hotel in a broad-horn moored in Big Dry, near the site of the great city, where he sells whiskey and other necessaries of life to the boatmen, and is one of the happiest of men, in the anticipation of the future glories of New Pekin. He no longer prints the Western Sun, for that was extinguished by the freshet which destroyed

the town, and at the same time carried away his types, his printing-press, and his printer's devil.

That worthy Scot, Kenneth Mactabb, having grown immensely rich, was in the decline of his days mortally smitten with the Swiss malady. He accordingly paid a visit to his early home; but he found, to his cost, that after a man has been forty years absent from his country, he may as well stay away altogether; for he will return only to visit the graves of his early associates. Disappointed at finding himself alone, even on the spot of his nativity, and too old to begin to plant the seed of affection in a new soil, with any hope of ever living to taste the fruits, he came back to America, and ended his days on the banks of James River. He did many generous acts worthy of record, but never could thoroughly get the better of his old habit of saving a penny. The last clause of his will forgave an old friend a debt of thousands, and the last act of his life was stooping to pick up a pin.

Conversing with a Missouri trader some years ago, we accidentally heard news of our old acquaintance Bushfield. It seems he had gradually receded, as the tide of white population flowed onwards, towards the setting sun, and at length established himself somewhere in the vicinity of one of our most remote military posts on the Missouri, where he frequently came to exchange his game and furs for powder, lead, and other indispensable articles. His luxuriant head of hair had become as white as the driven snow; his keen, watchful, deep-blue eye, though

sunk far in the socket, still retained its wild, resolute expression; and his person was as straight as an arrow. He regularly hunted on the confines of those vast plains where the buffaloes still lingered, and his great complaint was, that he could scarcely hear his dog bark or his gun go off in this tarnation place, where there was no echo, and where the sounds never came back again, but were lost in the interminable vastness of space.

"One morn they miss'd him;" another and another came, and he did not appear. This excited no attention, as he was often absent for weeks together. Shortly after, however, a party of hunters from the fort discovered him sitting upright against a tree, his rifle between his legs, and resting on his shoulder. He had shot his last shot, killed his last buffalo, and sunk into his last sleep. The animal was lying at a little distance, and his dog crouching at his feet, unconscious that the repose of his master was to last until the day of judgment. They buried him among the graves of their dead comrades, and many a hardy soldier said to himself, "Peace to the remains of the old hunter, one of the last of the companions of Boone!"

Did Colonel and Mrs. Dangerfield ever live to regret their consent, or did Virginia receive the reward of her tenderness, her gratitude, her perseverance, and her strong faith? We are happy in being able to reply to the first interrogatory in the negative, to the second in the affirmative. Some years have now elapsed, and Virginia and Rainsford become more happy every passing year, as their confidence in each

other and in themselves increases. It would be idle, as it would not be true, to say that this happiness was not at first shaded by occasional painful recollections of the past and apprehensions of the future. But these carried with them their own antidotes, in the increased tenderness and solicitude of Virginia to administer to the happiness of Rainsford, and his profound gratitude and affection when he remembered the debt he owed her. In short, the present content and fruition at length swallowed up the recollection of past sorrows, dispersed the clouds of the future, and laid the foundation of a solid, permanent reliance on the goodness of Providence.

Virginia has of late encouraged Rainsford to employ his ample wealth in the improvement of the surrounding country, and his fine talents in public life. Both Leonard Dangerfield and himself are now running a brilliant career in goodly fellowship; and Virginia sees with delight, that while the mind of her husband is occupied in grasping the vast magnitude of those subjects which connect themselves with the welfare and glory of our native land, it gathers strength, and acquires new brilliancy in the exercise. He no longer broods over himself and his petty apprehensions, but forgets them all in the noble ambition of being useful to others. Our heroine is rewarded as she deserves to be, for she leads a life of love and virtue, and her path is illuminated by the consciousness of having persevered in the payment of a debt of gratitude. She still lives, and we trust long will live, happy in the devoted affec-

tion of a man of whom she has reason to be proud; in the full enjoyment of a woman's best dower,—the love of her parents, her brother, her neighbours, and her dependants.

The moral of our tale will, we trust, be found in the warning it holds forth against the approaches of fanaticism, the weak indulgence of PRESENTIMENTS OF EVIL; the testimony it bears, that while there is life there is hope, and that nothing is more worthy the special interposition of a gracious Providence in our behalf than a perseverance in all the kind offices of humanity towards those on whom the hand of misfortune hath been heavily laid.

THE END.

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